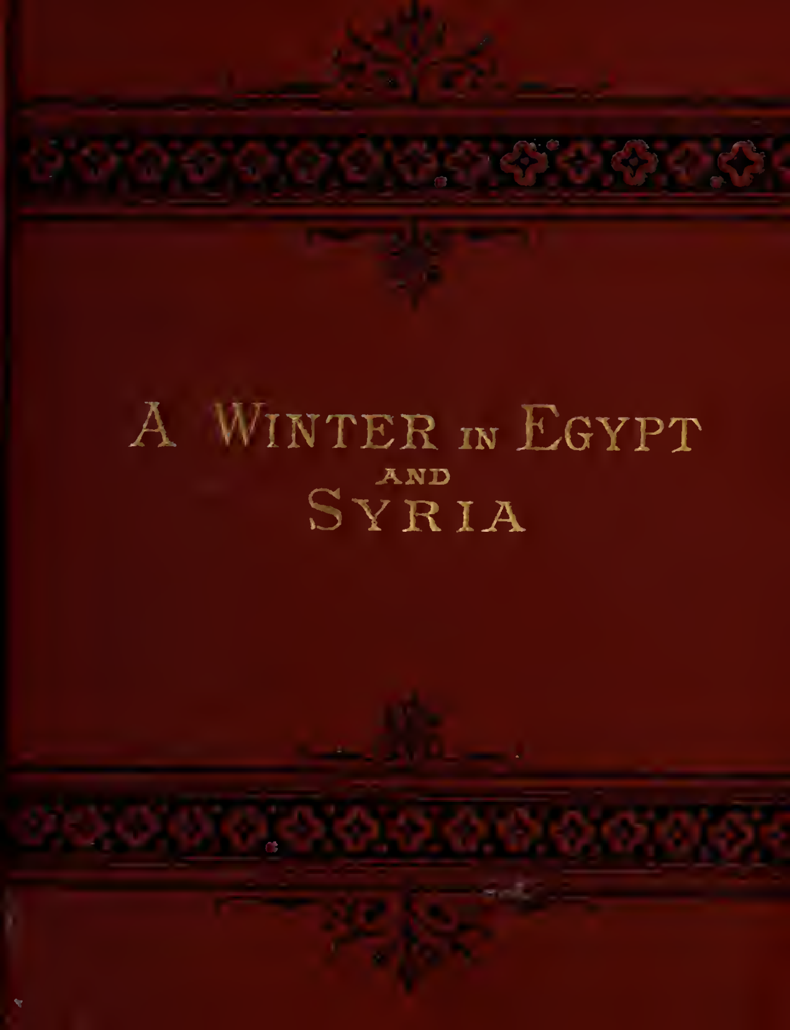
A WINTER IN EGYPT
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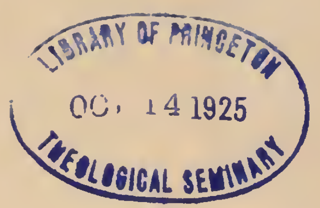

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THE

GATES OF THE EAST

A WINTER IN

EGYPT AND SYRIA

BY

HENRY C. POTTER, D.D.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OCT 1925
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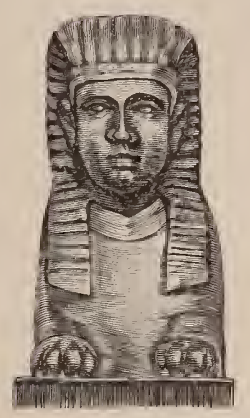

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PREFACE.

We had started for the Pyramids before eight o'clock in the morning. This was not, it must be owned, to get a view of them by sunrise, but to avoid being detained on the wrong side of the Nile, by the opening of the drawbridge which connects Cairo and the west bank of the river, until late in the afternoon. But though our early rising had no better motive than our convenience, it had its own abundant reward. It was early in December, and the country, as we rode on through the chill morning air, was covered by a dense mist which made any object at the distance of a hundred yards all but invisible. We were under the shadow of the Pyramids, therefore, almost before we were aware of their neighborhood, and as we turned to find the Sphinx, a sudden parting

of the dense vapors flashed its colossal outlines upon us with an effect which was almost uncomfortably startling.

Silently we stood and gazed. In our search we had become separated, and though but a few feet apart were viewing it from opposite angles.

"What a pure and graceful outline," I exclaimed, "despite its colossal proportions."

My companion remained silent a moment longer, and then said, slowly:

"Scarcely pure or graceful, I should say. The lips are too full to suggest such an idea, and the expression, while gracious and serene, is distinctly African and somewhat coarse and animal."

And straightway there followed a controversy which was both long and heated. Suddenly it occurred to the two disputants to exchange places, and soon after it became apparent that we were in imminent danger of exchanging our opinions likewise.

This modest parable is perhaps a sufficient apology for the following pages. Books about the East, of a far less unambitious character than this little volume, are already abundant. But each man's reminiscences of travel give a view of more or less familiar

scenery from a comparatively fresh view-point. And so these recollections of what others have already seen and described in pages both grave and gay, may perhaps help to set some features of the East in less wonted, if more subdued, lights.

Their title is intended chiefly as a disclaimer of any pretensions to extended research. As Jaffa and Alexandria, as they are described in the following pages, are the thresholds, respectively, of Egypt and Syria, so are the Egypt and Syria of to-day little more than the gates or portals of that vaster East which lies beyond them. To these still unfamiliar and, in some degree, unvisited regions, curiosity still turns most eagerly; and, meantime, while waiting for the reports of the adventurous spirits who are exploring them, may perhaps be willing to divert itself with reminiscences of lands and peoples less unfamiliar.

H. C. P.

I.

From Italy to Egypt.

The Parting-Place of Two Forms of Civilization — The Influence of Indian Life upon English Manners and English Character.

The traveller who leaves Brindisi as a passenger on board one of the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company's vessels, bound for Egypt, takes his last look at Italian shores as the stately ship creeps cautiously out of that ancient harbor at the hour of five in the morning. If the weather be fine, the first faint hints of daybreak will be flecking the distant East, and little by little as the vessel moves from her moorings the outlines of the town will be coming into view. At such a moment our traveller, if he be a tolerably quick observer, will discern, standing close to the water's edge, a low and ragged-looking structure, without either the dignity of age or

the fresher charms of youth, across whose face runs the legend in staring capitals, "English Welcome." If he be in a cynical mood (as he is greatly apt to be if he has travelled since noon of the previous day without pause, having come through from Bologna to Brindisi, some four hundred miles, by means of an all-night ride in a railway carriage, which is *not* a Pullman palace sleeping-car), he will be very apt to mutter something not very complimentary to the Italian ingenuity which, by such beguiling words, would fain coax the homeward-bound traveller into a dirty inn where he will be regaled with stale beer and sour wine.

And yet the words, after a rudely typical fashion, are at once expressive and true. The steamships that sail from Alexandria, in Egypt, to Brindisi, in Italy, are the carriers of the great tide of traffic between India and England, or, indeed, between Asia and Europe. And so, when the voyager from the East lands at last at that Italian port which was once the ancient Brindisium, he for the first time comes in contact with western civilization, and hears a European, and not unfrequently an English, welcome. In a word, in the experience of travel the port of Brindisi may be said to be the point at which the two civilizations part

company; and as I leaned over the taffrail of the good ship Hindostan, and read the slowly-fading words "English Welcome" over the door of the little Italian inn, I comprehended that they meant for me not welcome but farewell. The timbers beneath my feet were of English oak, and the commander who stood near me, issuing his few and brief orders, was unmistakably of English stock and training; but the crew who did his bidding were quite as unmistakably of another race. It did not require their Oriental costume, and quick, lithe movements, to betray them as Asiatics. There was in all that they did that wonderful absence of bustle or flurry which is one of the greatest charms of Eastern people. One could understand, while watching them, why it is that we Westerns have learned to turn to the East for rest. To a tired and fevered brain, fretted and fagged with the incessant hurry of our American ways, there is something inexpressibly soothing in the mere accidents of Oriental life. It is not only that the climate of the East itself disposes one to inactivity, but scarcely less, I am disposed to believe, because of that absence of nervous worry, of noise, of impatience, of sharp tones and pushing eagerness, which

contribute so largely, though often so insensibly, to wear upon one's nerves in connection with tasks and responsibilities that may not be exceptionally great or grave. During the progress of our voyage the wind sprang up suddenly, as it is so apt to do on the Mediterranean, and it became necessary to lower the ample awning which had been spread over the deck, and to do it with the utmost rapidity. The dullest imagination can easily depict to itself the amount of bluster and profanity on the part of superiors, and of clamor and blundering on the part of the crew, with which, on a ship manned as we are ordinarily accustomed to see them manned, this would have been accomplished. But as it was, there was something in the swift, silent, and unerring rapidity with which, amid the utter darkness of the evening, these Asiatics began and finished their task, which was almost ghost-like.

But it is not alone by the crew that one is reminded that he has turned his back upon the civilization and the customs of the West. The viands that appear upon the ship's table —among them "Bombay duck," which is a kind of dried fish, eaten as bread with one's curry, and Madras biscuit, in which assafœtida

is a prominent ingredient—the punka which hangs suspended over our heads as we partake of these novel delicacies; the currency in which the smoker pays for his cigars, the price of which, as he is informed, is "ten for a rupee"; the slatted partitions of our staterooms, arranged so as to make the ship a vast sieve through which the air can fully play—all these things tell us that we have left behind us wellnigh everything that is distinctive of European life.

And of this we are reminded not less forcibly as we come to know and identify our fellow passengers. There is, it is true, a sprinkling of tourists—travellers who are going to the East in search of rest, of novelty, or of a more sunny climate; but, as a rule, the ship's list is made up of persons who have homes or duties in the far East, and who are hastening back, after a Summer in England, to hard work in Bombay or Calcutta. There are judges and military men, well-bronzed and nobly-bearded subalterns in the Indian civil service; there is a missionary, a bride, and a Roman archbishop of Calcutta; and, most interesting to those of us who have homes and children, there are parents whom the hard exigencies of the Indian climate

have compelled to leave behind in England their children, and who are putting weary years and thousands of miles between them and all that is dearest to them. But whatever may be their private histories, almost all of them are, as travelled Englishmen so universally are, delightful companions and most kindly and intelligent fellow-travellers. It is surely one of the lesser boons of India to England that it has rubbed off from so many English people the somewhat narrow and insular characteristics which make English men and women sometimes not altogether lovely to their American cousins. We shall probably never see these fellow-voyagers of ours again; but we shall remember them, I fancy, for many a day to come.

Crossing the Mediterranean Sea is apt to be a troubled and turbulent experience; but our voyage from shore to shore (I write these lines within sight of that modern Pharos which lights the way to the port of Alexandria) has been as serene as a journey by steamboat up the Hudson; and in the evening, when the main deck, lighted, under its vast awning, with huge globe lamps hung at intervals along its whole length, is thronged with the gay groups that have come up from our 6 o'clock

dinner, it is hard to realize that one is at sea at all. There is not even the usual ocean swell, and the level sea, with the moon just rising behind the hills of Candia—that Crete which, to the Christian hearts, will forever be consecrated by its association with its first Bishop, the devout and zealous Titus—combines to make a scene at once unique and picturesque. To any one seeking repose, such a life at sea, could it last long enough, would be simply perfect; and as one of our party, a lady of somewhat nervous temperament, confesses to having slept twelve hours without awaking, it may safely be recommended as a "soft nepenthe" for irritated and tired nervous organizations.

But I am warned that it is time to stop. A soft-voiced and comely-looking personage in a flowing costume of dark blue, with a brilliant sash and turban, appears unexpectedly at my elbow, and informs me that we are to go ashore at Alexandria without delay, and that he is commissioned to escort our party as far as Cairo. He is Hassan Speke by name, and he bears credentials from honored New Yorkers, which encourage us to confide ourselves to his guidance with entire assurance. A short row in an open boat, a parting

glance at our good ship Hindostan, and our feet are on Egyptian soil and our ears saluted with the babel of tongues which mark an Eastern seaport.

II.

The Gate of Egypt.

First Impressions of the East—The Bible and the Arabian Nights—Aladdin Buying his Lamp.

There is undoubtedly one advantage in a Custom House which has never been adequately recognized. It is a singularly efficient check upon a traveller's excessive enthusiasm. The world will probably never know how many glowing utterances have been stifled and silenced by the petty vexations of "passing" one's luggage. The voyager from the West who sails into the harbor of Alexandria will

be dull, indeed, if both memory and imagination are not aroused by the sight of its towers and mosques and minarets. His mind will first recall the grand Macedonian conqueror whose name it bears, and if he be a Christian student he will not less vividly remember its once matchless library, and the story of the translations of the Septuagint. Not less vividly will rise the history of the Church in Alexandria and of the great names whose genius Kingsley has inwoven into the thread of his greatest novel, "Hypatia." And then the nearer history of later days, of the conquests of the Turk and of the Corsican—it is very easy to see that there is a great deal of material here for "fine" writing and "gushing" enthusiasm; but it is astonishing how rapidly this enthusiasm evaporates in the presence of a preternaturally solemn-looking African gentleman, whose compound expression of self-consequence and stupidity makes one recall instinctively some early fruits of the Fifteenth Amendment, who challenges your trunks as they are landed from the feluccas, and whose vigilance in their examination will depend, absolutely and invariably, upon the very practical question whether you approach him beforehand with one rupee

or two. You know, and you know that he knows, that the Egyptian customs laws exempt all passengers' luggage of whatever sort, and that he has not the slightest right to do more than assure himself of what is obvious enough, that you are a traveller and not a trader; and this knowledge does not contribute to the serenity of your temper while he commands you to open one portmanteau after another, his blundering and bungling scrutiny of which indicates most plainly that he would not be able to recognize a contraband article if he should see it.

The ordeal produces one effect with unerring certainty. By the time you have got through with the ebony guardian of the Khedive's revenue (whose tint implies his Nubian rather than Egyptian extraction), every vestige of sentimental enthusiasm has evaporated, and you are in a fine state of indifference as to every historic association or monument of antiquity by which Alexandria is distinguished.

Perhaps it is as well that it is so, for otherwise the sights that greet one who passes for the first time through the thronged and narrow streets of this busy seaport would be almost too much for his equanimity. Alex-

andria is undoubtedly one of the least eastern of eastern cities. Its own national customs and characteristics have been so overlaid with those of other races and lands that in some parts of the town there is little that is not distinctively French or English or Italian. There are shops and signs and posters on the walls representing each and all of these nations and their speech. But all this does not extinguish, if it does much more than most imperfectly modify, the intensely unfamiliar look of that which your first drive or walk reveals to you. The open shops, with their cross-legged proprietors sitting so close to the carriage-way that one might reach out his hand and reap a harvest of commercial turbans without leaving his seat; the water-carriers, with their skins filled with water and borne upon their shoulders; the microscopic donkeys, bearing personages so rotund and portly that one wonders why Mr. Bergh has never moved eastward with his merciful work of prevention; the veiled women, who look so mysterious, and whose costumes are so perfect a type, in their hideous shapelessness, of their harder lot of seclusion and inferiority; the tropical fruits and flowers, which by their endless profusion make vulgar and valueless

the rarest exotics of the hot-houses of European princes; all these things come upon one with a force of surprise and fascination which no familiarity derived from books or the spoken reminiscences of others can in the slightest degree diminish. Indeed, all the descriptions of books and the glowing tales of travellers are alike forgotten, with two memorable exceptions—one of these is the Bible, and the other is the "Arabian Nights." I shall never forget the suddenness with which, when for the first time I saw an Arab *seis*, or runner, flying, a very figure of Mercury, with his flowing and wing-like sleeves, his long, slender wand, and his indescribably graceful, elastic, and at the same time fleet and tireless, gait—there sprung to my lips the passage, "And Elijah girded up his loins and ran before the chariot of Ahab, even to the entrance of Jezreel."

So scarcely less of scenes from the "Arabian Nights." I passed, one day, the shop or booth of a dealer in lamps, and in the attitude of a young Egyptian, who stood critically scrutinizing a brass lamp, which, from its material and shape, looked as if it might have been made a thousand years ago, there was something which made me exclaim,

"Aladdin!" as if on the instant the marvels of the wonderful lamp were waiting to be repeated. There is a strange excitement in scenes like these, when they are met for the first time, which makes one almost doubt, for the moment, his own identity.

Just because words can so poorly reproduce such impressions, I shall not be guilty of the impertinence of describing what so many others have seen and sketched before, and what art has made even more familiar than have letters. Of course every newcomer in Egypt goes to see Pompey's Pillar and Cleopatra's Needle, and equally of course, if he is moved to think about them at all, resents the mistaken tradition which associates the former with a name which it was not reared to commemorate, and despises the latter as so contemptible a memorial of so famous a woman; but I think that those of us who went sight-seeing together for the first time in Alexandria found our foremost object of interest in a very different direction, and in a far more modern structure. Some of us had heard of the Hospital of the Deaconesses of Kaiserswerth, and we were anxious to see something, if possible, of their work. Of our visit I shall have some account to give in another chapter.

III.

The Land of the Sun.

First Days in Egypt—Perpetually Unclouded Skies — Conversation Minus the Weather — The Deaconesses' Hospital Work.

The day of our arrival in Alexandria happened, fortunately, to be one of the two days in the week when the Hospital of the Deaconesses of Kaiserswerth is open to visitors, and upon driving to the gateway we were at once admitted to the wards. A more striking contrast to the scenes which we had left without it would not be easy to conceive. A few moments before we had stood at the base of the pillar which, known as Pompey's, commemorates the victories of Diocletian, amid surroundings which appealed with equal offensiveness to almost all our senses. It was just at the edge of a huge cemetery, whose living fringe consisted of a straggling line of

hovels, so mean and dreary that one felt instinctively that the living must daily envy the happier and more decent lot of the dead who slept beside them. The Egyptians have a passion for sitting, eating, sleeping, and working on the ground, which to our western eyes is as filthy as it is unintelligible; and then the flies and the heat and the decaying *débris* of vegetable matter—all this made a condition so degraded and pitiful that it seemed almost an affront to be passively looking upon it, instead of straightway setting to work to better it.

It was from such spectacles that we passed in an instant to the roomy, cool, and spotlessly-clean precincts of the Deaconesses' Hospital. I had made it my business while in the great cities of Europe to inspect their hospitals with especial reference to the two points of arrangement and ventilation. In these respects, and no less in many others, nothing could be better than the Kaiserswerth Hospital at Alexandria. The Germans have a happy gift of making the houses in which they live look cosey and home-like; and in the wards, as we passed on through the hospital, there were so many nameless little tokens of thoughtfulness and refinement that we recognized at once the

presence of womanly taste and painstaking. It being visitors' day, the patients were, some of them, enjoying the visits of friends, and there was something indescribably pathetic in the brightening and grateful looks which they, and those persons who sat beside them, turned upon the sister who accompanied us from ward to ward.

Mission-work, so far as it has been an attempt to convert them from their ancient faith, has been proverbially slow and disheartening work among Mohammedan races, and missionaries have found how almost invincible are the prejudices of a people who cling so tenaciously to the religious traditions of their past; but one could not help thinking that if anything could efficiently translate to the Egyptian the spirit of the religion of Jesus Christ, and, at the same time, win a way for it to the hearts of these disciples of the Moslem prophet, it would be the incomparable beauty and benignity of this work of the Deaconesses of Kaiserswerth.

A work more devoid of sentimentalism, and yet more heroic in its unrecorded self-denials, it would be hard to imagine. The diseases which bring patients to the hospital are often of the most distressing and loathesome kind,

and a life of such ministrations, in a debilitating climate, far from home and friends, is one that only the loftiest inspirations could make endurable. And yet the simple, robust, practical way in which the deaconesses went about their work was a positive refreshment to behold. There was an utter absence of a complaining or whining or sanctimonious tone, an open-eyed and straightforward candor in mien and speech and gesture, which might well be imitated by the members of religious orders everywhere. Yet these women can feel, and feel intensely; for when one of the visitors, upon leaving, placed in the hand of the sister who had attended us a substantial token of interest in the work, her face, as she received it, and her voice, as she said in broken and stammering English, "Surely the Lord will reward you," were surcharged with intensest emotion.

As we passed out of the hospital gate we were greeted with a scene which most forcibly recalled to us our Oriental surroundings. Seated on the ground just beside the road was a woman draped in black from head to foot, and surrounded by a circle of female figures. We found, upon inquiry, that it was a mother who had lost her son (the lad having just died

in the hospital), and whose friends had come to mourn with her. Here, as before, we found ourselves thinking of descriptions in the Bible, and the picture of Job's friends sitting at the first as these women were sitting, in a common and unbroken silence, became a living reality. We could not help hoping that here the resemblance might end, and that, unlike the Patriarch in his grief, the bereaved mother might not be tortured by the impertinent attempts of her friends to interpret to her the dealings of God.

As we rode back to our inn, the clouds which had been gathering broke, and we were disposed to grumble at the inconvenience to which the shower seemed likely to subject us; but we were silenced when our dragoman told us that it was the first rain that Alexandria had had for a year! When, after it was over, and the evening closed down upon us, we looked out from our balcony upon such a night as one sees nowhere else in the world, we had a fresh surprise. A friend in Paris had charged us to provide ourselves with an astronomical chart, and we were thankful that we had heeded the suggestion. Such a contrast to the skies of Europe it is simply impossible to imagine. Among our travelling

companions in crossing the Mediterranean was a distinguished American whose official residence is in Germany, and who mentioned that he had not seen the sun in Berlin for five weeks. It was not surprising, therefore, to hear him say that when he glided out of the Mont Cenis Tunnel into the sunny air of Italy, "it was like coming into heaven;" but even the sun and the sky of Italy seem pale beside those of Egypt; and when the night comes it has a soft and luminous charm which makes going to bed seem almost profanity. In Alexandria, moreover, our surroundings made sleep nearly as impossible as it seemed irreverent; for, whether it was a consequence of the situation of our inn, or of the exigencies of some Mohammedan feast or fast, our ears were saluted all night long with the call of the *muezzin* to prayer, and whether his call was the ancient one, "Prayer is better than sleep," or some other, we were unanimous in the conclusion that nothing could have been worse than such wretched sleep as was ours.

But, in spite of all such minor annoyances —and, of course, it is only in exceptional situations that they are to be encountered— the climate of Egypt has a perpetual and

matchless charm. Its airs are not softer, nor its skies sunnier, perhaps, than those of parts of our own land or many others. But to the invalid, its unbroken equilibrium, if I may use the phrase, must be an unspeakable comfort. The American inhabitants of Egypt whom I have seen declare that its Summer heats are less excessive than those of New York, while its serene and sunny Winters, where storms are simply impossible, make living a perpetual delight. The effect it has, however, of withdrawing from active circulation a large part of the most useful small change of western conversation is at once amusing and awkward. Coming from England, where, at the close of a great ecclesiastical gathering, lasting for a week, during the whole of which the sun was visible for just five hours, I nevertheless heard the mayor of the city felicitating the members of the assembly upon the fact that they had been "favored with such remarkably fine weather," one naturally remarks the dawn of a sunshiny morning. But to an inhabitant it is, apparently, quite unmeaning to speak of it. If you say it is a fine day, he stares at you with an air of curious interrogation which shows that he does not quite grasp your meaning. It is

as much a truism as if you had said "there is a sun in the heavens." To him it is as much the function of the sun to shine in an absolutely unclouded sky as it is that of the earth to turn upon its axis. I am not sure that so much sunshine might not grow monotonous at last, but as a change from harsher and gloomier skies it is certainly most delightful. As one experiences it for the first time, his wonder is not that there has been one Lady Duff Gordon with her home upon the banks of the Nile, but rather that the whole English people in a body do not flock to the land of whose great commercial highway they have so lately and so wisely possessed themselves.

IV.

First Days in Cairo.

Odd Phases of Mohammedan Character—The Remedy for Egypt's Ills.

It is an ignominious approach to Cairo to find your way into it by means of an English railway carriage. If one has read Eden's descriptions of the approach to the city, as seen from the Nile, or from the back of a camel, he realizes that he is purchasing comfort at a very large sacrifice of picturesqueness as he runs into the Cairo station. The station itself wears the air of a stopping-place on the Pacific Railway, with the addition of a slight French veneer. There is nothing Oriental in the omnibus, or in the steeds that draw it, and one has to drive a block or two before he realizes that he is in an Oriental city.

The first thing that conspicuously indicates

that is a drinking fountain erected by the present Khedive's mother, and indicating on the part of that estimable old lady a thoughtfulness for the comfort of the common people which has not always been the distinguishing characteristic of her royal son. Nothing could be more utterly unlike a European or American drinking fountain than this one in Cairo. It looks, instead, like a bank or a prison, and is as difficult of approach as if it were a post-office. In order to get your cup of water you have to climb a steep flight of steps and apply at one of a series of windows, which are closed by massive iron gratings, through which the water is warily passed. And such a sight makes one straightway appreciate the preciousness of pure water. I realized it in another way when I was told that an officer in high rank in the government indicated his especial confidence in his second wife (who, it appears, is far more of a favorite than any of the other three) by entrusting to her keeping the key of his water-jar. Could there be a more expressive indication, incidentally, of the life of wariness and suspicion which an Oriental personage of rank so often leads, expecting to be poisoned by the hands of the persons who owe him the most loyal

devotion; and, again, of the preciousness of the thing which, free as the air with us, a prince in Egypt keeps under lock and key?

I realized this still further when, a few days later, I encountered in the bazaar a water-peddler, who pestered me to buy a cup of water, as if he were offering me the rarest bargain. But one comes to understand it when he finds that the great mass of the people are dependent upon the water which is brought from the river by hand, either in jars upon the heads of girls or in skins upon the backs of men. Anything which involves so much laborious drudgery must be, in a certain sense, a costly luxury.

The system is not without its advantages, which are not perhaps adequately estimated. An Egyptian water-carrier is the very realization of graceful motion. As the women come up from the river's bank, skilfully balancing the huge jars of water upon their heads, you find yourself owning that no picture, by whatsoever gifted hand, has at all conveyed to you the singular charm of their bearing and action. It was impossible that it should convey it, for, although a picture can suggest motion, it cannot portray it; and it must surely be a lesson to the women of more civ-

ilized nations who have been striving for generations by a thousand conventionalisms of dress, of pose, and of action to secure the charm of graceful movement and aspect to find themselves utterly eclipsed by a statue of living and breathing bronze, whose only garment is composed of a few yards of dirty blue cotton cloth, hanging loosely from her throat to her feet, and who is, nevertheless, in every movement of her stately figure, and in every wave and fold of her simple drapery, a very poem of grace and dignity. One could not help speculating what would be the effect upon the person's most interested in the matter, if the young ladies whose only acquaintance with the Central Park reservoir consists at present in driving languidly past it, were constrained, instead, to supply their own families with its liquid stores after the Egyptian fashion. It would be a novelty upon the shady side of Fifth avenue; but it would vastly diminish the number of narrow-chested and consumptive young women who now stroll to and fro through that thoroughfare. When you go to Sakkara to visit its Pyramids, your donkey-boy, if you eschew the railway, will have to run beside you, first and last, for a distance of thirty-five miles.

"What splendid lungs!" you think, and are puzzled to explain such rare endurance until you remember that the donkey-boy's mother was a water-carrier, as are all of the Egyptian women of the lower classes, to a greater or less extent, and then you understand where your young companion got the deep-chested endurance that reminds you of an Arabian race-horse. And then, too, you find yourself considering whether, after all, we do not pay for our "modern conveniences" too high a price, and whether fewer stationary basins and more muscular exertion might not be good for American as well as for Egyptian women.

At any rate, it is a good deal more rational than the first specimen of masculine activity which I happened to witness in Cairo. Among our travelling companions in our voyage across the Mediterranean was an English clergyman, who had been for many years engaged in missionary work at Peshawur in India. He tarried for some days in Cairo, to make inquiries as to Mohammedanism in Egypt, and, at his suggestion, a few of us employed a part of our first day in Cairo in visiting the Mosque of the Dancing Dervishes. It was Friday, which is the Mohammedan

Sabbath, and we reached the mosque just as the dervishes had begun their peculiar service. It has been so often described that I shall not attempt to depict its most eccentric characteristics; but I wish that American readers, who know it only from the clever, but chiefly ludicrous, descriptions of their literary countrymen or others, could read the admirable work of the Rev. Mr. Hughes (the English clergyman who accompanied us), if only for the insight which it gives into the religious significance of this strange and apparently meaningless rite. The Dancing Dervishes are a monastic order, living in community, and holding to certain doctrines common to the mystics and quietists. Their not ungraceful and evenly-protracted motion, which is maintained without any sound on the part of the performers (although it is accompanied by the dismal tintinnabulation of an Egyptian orchestra, and the monotonous and droning chant of a few choristers seated in a gallery), is supposed somehow to sublimate the coarser part of their nature, and to lift them into a state of more intimate communion with heaven. It is easy to see how this impression obtains; for the continued and rapid revolutions which they maintain—revolutions so

swift and protracted as to make one almost dizzy in observing them—must produce a condition of the brain in which clear perception is simply impossible. It is not the only instance in which dizziness has been mistaken for spiritual exaltation, and we needed only to watch it for a little while to see that the participants were in profound earnest. It was at first a somewhat perplexing circumstance that the principal personage who presided over the exercises took no part in the dancing, but it was evident that he had reached an age when pirouetting at the rate of about forty revolutions a minute was wholly out of the question. He contented himself, therefore, with occasionally advancing from a richly-dyed wool mat at the edge of the circle of dancers, on which, at the beginning of the exercises, he had taken his stand, and making a slight reverence to the dancers, which was immediately acknowledged on their part by a very profound obeisance.

As I have said, there is enough that is ludicrous in this service to impress the most serious observer; but it was equally impossible, after the first sensation of the intense absurdity of the spectacle of a dozen or more full-grown men whirling rapidly upon their

toes, not to be profoundly saddened by it. A mechanical exercise of the body as an act of religious worship must necessarily be a melancholy sight, just in proportion as it is obviously serious. And of the seriousness of these Dancing Dervishes there could be no doubt. There was among them a youth whose face was a study for a painter. He had scarcely passed the age of boyhood, but his rapt and absorbed expression, when contrasted with the duller and more vacant countenances of his fellow-worshippers, reminded one of Doré's wonderful pictures of the neophyte, in which a young monk with thoughtful and far-seeing gaze is seated amid a group of drowsy and drowsing fellow-worshippers of the same order. What a misdirection of spiritual aspirations! What a waste of fine powers, too, perhaps—powers which, more worthily directed, might have lifted more than one of his countrymen to a loftier and worthier conception of the God whom they and he professed to honor.

Not that the Mohammedan faith is without some aspects worthy of imitation by persons who account themselves disciples of a purer faith. After concluding our negotiations with our dragoman for our approaching voyage up

the Nile, one of the party added, "And now, Hassan, let us pray for a fair wind." "A fair wind?" said our mild and low-voiced Hassan interrogatively in reply. "Yes; I mean a north wind." "Nay, sir," was Hassan's answer, "let us be content to believe that God will send us the right wind." "To be sure," was the somewhat impatient rejoinder to this, "but what we want is something different from this wind," which was blowing at the moment steadily from the South. "Very true, sir," said Hassan, as mildly as before, but with a slight tone of rebuke in his voice, "but do you not believe, sir, that this wind has been the right wind for somebody to-day?"

Of course, we are wont to explain all such expressions by referring them to the influence of that doctrine of fatalism which is so large an ingredient in the religious ideas of the average Moslem. Probably this is true enough, but one cannot help wishing sometimes, when seeing the submission of the Egyptian to the inevitable or unavoidable, that they who despise his religion might yet somehow acquire a little more of his imperturbable serenity and equanimity of temper. On our way to the Mosque of the Dervishes

I was witness of a scene which curiously illustrated this. Except in that part of Cairo which had been built or rebuilt under the administration of the present Khedive, the streets are extremely narrow, and an ordinary carriage of European construction can often barely squeeze its way through them. As we approached the mosque our own carriage was detained by a block in the street, and while waiting for the way to be cleared, a procession of camels, loaded with bales of straw, attempted to pass between us and the wall. Seated at the entrance of a shop, was a group of elderly men, between whom and ourselves the camels undertook to force their way. As the first one approached, one of the bales of straw which hung at his side struck the turban of one of these men, and knocked it into his lap. Without even turning his head, he quietly restored it to its place, and went on with his conversation. The next camel that passed managed to tilt the bale of straw with which he was loaded so that it struck some projecting wood-work above the same man's head, and dusted him all over with a fine powder of dirty chaff. As before, however, he made no sign, and I was admiring his placid composure, when a third camel, ap-

proaching, contrived to convert his bale of straw into a most effective catapult, with which, striking the patient tradesman squarely in the back, he knocked him and his chair completely over. Now, said I, we shall hear what an Oriental can do in the way of anathema when he is aroused. But no; the elderly victim of these repeated assaults simply gathered himself up, shook the dust and chaff from the skirts of his garments, and sat down, without a word.

There is, to be sure, another side to this, which is not so attractive. One is constantly pained, in Egypt, to see the apathy of most people as to what Mr. Greg has called "remediable evils." Dirt, and the diseases which are simply consequent upon dirt, are among these, and it is deplorable to see how utterly indifferent people are to dirt when there is not the slightest excuse for it. With the very poor, who are in the vast majority, and who live in the most wretched hovels, which are little more than mud huts, neatness or even cleanliness is scarcely possible; but it is often as rare among those who are well to do and who have both means and servants at their command. At the request of the ladies of our party, our dragoman brought his wife and

infant to see them, and it was hard to say which was the more noticeable, the costliness and elegance of the lady's attire or the dirty and neglected appearance of her child. It was quite in vain that an attempt was made to instil into the mind of this Egyptian mother some American ideas of neatness, and some one dryly suggested that it was a gracious providence which ordered that Moses in his infancy should have fallen into the hands of his own mother as his nurse, instead of having had to struggle up to manhood through successive and superincumbent layers of Egyptian household dirt. When it was intimated to our native visitor that she might at least so far exert herself as to keep the flies out of her baby's eyes, the suggestion was received with a chorus of laughter from herself and her attendants. And yet the simple neglect to do this thing is one of the most fruitful causes in propagating the national scourge of ophthalmia with which Egyptians are so commonly affected.

What seems to be wanted, therefore, if Egypt is ever to be restored to anything like its former greatness, is to awaken in the breasts of its people a certain measure of discontent with things as they are. Could

this be combined with that absence of irritability, and that patience under evils which are not remediable, they would certainly be one of the most successful as well as most agreeable peoples under the sun. The nation that built the Pyramids (whether we choose to accept Mr. Piazzi Smith's view, and find in those huge structures the key to almost all scientific and theological mysteries or not) must have exceptional capabilities of achievement; and although one cannot admire the austere exactions in the way of taxation which characterize the government of the present Khedive, it is still matter for congratulation that he has shown himself so ready to learn of other nations, and has already done so much to better the sanitary condition of his capital, if no more. It is not a great while since the plague was a periodic visitation in Cairo; but the Khedive has, by straightening its streets and tearing down large masses of fever-breeding dwellings, really inaugurated a new system of ventilation, and Europeans now pass the Summer there with as little risk, and with less discomfort, they maintain, than we do at home. "Do you not find the Summer heats very trying?" I asked of Dr. Lansing, the head of the American mission here.

"Somewhat so, at times," was his answer, "but, on the whole, less so than those of New York." And if it were otherwise, the permanent resident has only to retire to northern Syria, where the perpetual snows of Mount Lebanon will give him beneath its shadow, as I am assured by those who habitually resort to it, one of the most bracing and delightful climates in the world.

V.

An Arab Temple.

A Day in the Mosque of Mohammed Ali.

Mention has already been made of a service which some of us witnessed in a Mosque of the Dancing Dervishes on the day of our arrival in Cairo. I did not, however, refer to the building, because it was in every way insignificant and ordinary; but in this respect the dervishes' mosques, whether of the dancing or howling fraternities, are utterly unlike many

of the Mohammedan places of worship in Cairo, which are singularly impressive and beautiful.

The first of these which I happened to see was the Mosque of Mohammed Ali, which is situated within the enclosure known as the Citadel, built by Saladin in 1166, of stone brought from the small Pyramids of Geezeh. Since my visit to it I have seen every other mosque with any pretensions to architectural beauty in Cairo, only to return to it from all of them with increased delight and admiration. I know how heretical this opinion will seem to many travellers in Egypt, for is it not written in "Murray" that "it has not the pure Oriental character of other works in Cairo," that "its minarets, which are of the Turkish extinguisher order, are painfully elongated, in defiance of all proportion," that "the decoration of the interior is in very bad taste, and the wretched lanterns strung about in every direction help to offend the eye?" Such dogmatic criticism, generously sprinkled with vigorous adjectives, is sufficient to silence the most enthusiastic admiration, and I was not altogether surprised to hear an accomplished American whom I met in the mosque —and who, if I were to mention his name, would be universally credited with abundant

courage of opinion—reply doubtfully to my warm expressions of admiration, "Yes, but you know Murray says it is very bad." It is undoubtedly true that the Mosque of Mohammed Ali is less purely Oriental in its character than others in Cairo; but then it is hard to understand why a people should not write its history in the structures which it rears as well as in the books which it prints; and as Egypt has more than once known the presence of western conquerors, it is scarcely surprising that something that is not wholly Oriental should reveal itself here and there in her architecture. That there is anything incongruous with its surroundings or inharmonious in itself, to be found in this noble mosque I venture respectfully to deny. As to its interior decoration, it would perhaps be a very fair question, What, in the adornment of an eastern mosque, *is* good taste? There is a great deal, unquestionably, that is coarse and crude, but in this respect there is nothing that, compared with multitudes of famous buildings in Egypt, is exceptional, and while the details are often lacking in elegance and delicacy the general effect is full of dignity and genuine grandeur.

As you put off your shoes at the outer door

of the mosque you enter a beautiful marble-paved court, or cloister, the whole aspect of which appeals alike to your sentiment of reverence and your love of artistic fitness. It is so absolutely pure and white and stainless that you own instinctively that to tread its precincts with shoes stained with the travel of the dusty streets would be indeed a veritable profanation. You go to the graceful fountain which stands in the centre, honoring the Moslem reverence that will not enter its holy place with unwashed hands or feet; and when one stands within the richly-decorated doorway he must be dull or prejudiced indeed if he does not confess to the combined sense of majesty and splendor with which its lofty proportions and brilliant coloring fill his mind. Even the "wretched lanterns," which are simply globes of clear glass, without the faintest hint of color or decoration, somehow fell in, to my barbaric and American vision, with the general veneration for light as a symbol of the Source of light which is so characteristic of all eastern religions, and scarcely less of that great body of eastern Christians whom we know generally as the Greek Church. Indeed, it seemed at first a curious, but, after a few moments' reflection,

not an unnatural association of ideas to find myself comparing the Mosque of Mohammed Ali with the famous Russo-Greek church known as St. Isaac's, which I had seen a few months before in St. Petersburg. The latter is undoubtedly one of the great ecclesiastical structures of the world, and yet I am constrained to own that it never produced upon me the effect of the Mosque of the Citadel (as it is more familiarly called) in Cairo. The sense of height, of splendor and religious appropriateness, instead of diminishing continually increased, and one could understand and pardon the impulsiveness of a somewhat effusive English lady who, during our stay at Cairo, was seen to prostrate herself in the mosque in Oriental fervor of posture and mien.

Undoubtedly this feeling, whether experienced in the Mosque of Mohammed Ali or any other, is in part to be explained by the contagion of example. Somebody has said that there is a way of participating in public worship among Christian nations which, if only it could generally obtain, would compel imitation from lookers-on. And one could understand this in watching the individual Mohammedan worshipper. Unfamiliar as must be Frank faces and Frank costumes—

unwelcome as must be, according to all the ideas of the Moslem, the presence of Frank women—yet the worshippers in the Mosque of Mohammed Ali never turned their heads, or evinced in any way the slightest consciousness of our presence. On the floor of the vast building, which was unincumbered with any pews, chairs, or sittings of any sort, and covered only with Turkish rugs or carpets scattered here and there, they were dotted, kneeling, standing, or prostrate with their foreheads to the ground, and wearing an air of the most profound seriousness and intentness. It was just at sunset, and the lofty building was flooded with the last gleams of the departing day; but the worshippers, as they prayed here and there, were turned all alike with their faces toward the East. I wish I could at all describe the expression of those faces. I have spoken of their intentness, but the word is equally feeble and insufficient. It was at once absorbed, inquisitive, and penetrating; and as one stood watching the dusky countenances turned so fixedly toward the blank wall a few yards distant, he almost turned to see what it was beyond that blank wall which the Arab devotee seemed to be gaz-

ing at so earnestly. One of the ninety-nine names of God in the Mohammedan ritual is "The Revealer," and we could not but breathe the prayer that somehow He whom they so blindly sought might show Himself to these simple but most fervent worshippers.

As we lingered to watch them, two or three young men, pilgrims on their way to make their annual visit to the tomb of the prophet at Mecca, entered the mosque, evidently for the first time. Children of the desert, as their whole garb and bearing showed them to be, their air and conduct were precisely such as one would expect from children. They fingered curiously the railing of the enclosure within which is Mohammed Ali's tomb, and wandered around the whole interior circumference of the building, submitting everything that they saw to the double test of sight and touch. Nothing escaped them, and it was only when they had thoroughly satisfied their curiosity that it occurred to them to think of their devotions.

Nothing could be more different than the scene which, when we turned to a corner of the mosque near the tomb of the founder, confronted us. In the centre of a small

group who were gathered about him in half-kneeling, half-sitting postures, sat an elderly man upon a rug, which he had evidently brought with him, expounding the Koran. Most of his handful of hearers had copies of the Koran, with which they followed him, and many of them did not hesitate to interrupt him repeatedly with questions. It was a scene alike for the painter and the student. There were no two attitudes alike, and yet all were equally graceful and easy. Here and there was a pupil whose eager face and incessantly acquiescent nod made one envy the facility and the enthusiasm with which he followed his preceptor; and what was most curious, though the whole process of expounding and hearing and answering questions was going on in an ordinary colloquial tone, none of the adjacent worshippers seemed to be in the slightest degree disturbed by it. A looker-on would have discovered in the whole scene a suggestion worthy of the consideration of the advocates, in Christian lands, of what are known as free and open churches. In all the vast area there were, as I have said, no seats, benches, or chairs, no reserved places which could be purchased by wealth or caste. The

whole was covered with carpets, and was equally free to all; and the opportunities which this absence of fixtures afforded for utilizing any part of the sacred edifice in the way I have indicated for little knots of students of their sacred volume, above all, the absolute freedom with which, at all hours of the day, every part of the splendid building was placed at the unreserved disposal of the humblest worshipper, suggested that here, too, was something worthy of the imitation of those who happen to be the guardians of the sacred buildings of a purer faith.

VI.

The Mosques of Cairo.

Scenes in Egypt's University — A Notable Temple.

It would not be easy to imagine a greater contrast to the scene of dignified and hushed quietude which we found in the Mosque

of the Citadel than that which saluted us, a few days later, when we went to visit the Mosque of Azhar, or the "Splendid Mosque," as it is called.

Here, certainly, no one could find fault with the architecture on the score of its departure from the traditions of Oriental art; and while the more than four hundred columns with which its interior is adorned break up the perspective in a somewhat vexatious way, they produce a labyrinthian effect which is very pleasing and novel. They are of granite, porphyry, and marble taken from old Egyptian temples, and as one threaded his way among them the very natural speculation arose: What if these relics of ancient greatness could each have for a little while the gift of speech and relate to the traveller who visits them to-day the scenes and events of other and grander days in which they bore their part! What "sermons in stones" one might hearken to if only they could tell us where originally they stood, and of what long ago they were the witnesses!

Surely those scenes must have been widely different from the surroundings amidst which they find themselves to-day, for at present the Mosque of Azhar is also the College of

Cairo, and, in fact, the principal University of the East. It includes within itself two large courts, with which are connected several smaller porticoes, and when we entered it all these were thronged with students from all parts of Egypt and the East, either gathered about their favorite professors or engaged in study. Whatever else they may or may not acquire, it would be impossible to study at all amid such a Babel of sounds without sooner or later acquiring a considerable power of abstracting the mind from outward interruptions. At the first glance the great court which we entered seemed to be a scene of utter confusion. The first group which caught my eye consisted of two young gentlemen who, having reached a point of difference as to the interpretation of the Koran, which was lying at their feet, were engaged, with considerable vigor, both of speech and action, in beating their ideas into each others' heads. Having continued this process for some time, and being apparently as far from a harmonious conclusion of their dispute as when they began, suddenly, without a moment's warning, each spat in the other's face, and then they both straightway sat down in the most amicable fashion, as if this exchange of

insults had somehow cleared the air, and brought them to a state of cordial and complete theological agreement.

Passing on, we came to another group of still younger students, who were tormenting one of their number by snatching his *fez*, or *tarboosh*, from his head, and tossing it from hand to hand. I was reflecting how entirely western and familiar was the aspect of this youthful sport, when an official personage suddenly appeared in the midst of the group, and with a few well-directed blows from a heavy knotted rope sent them flying in all directions. But, amid all this confusion, groups of middle-aged men engaged in intensely earnest debate, or solitary students poring over their books, and reading or memorizing, apparently in utter unconsciousness of what was going on about them, were to be seen on every hand. The University was formerly handsomely endowed, but was deprived of its endowments by the late Mohammed Ali, and at present the professors receive no salaries, neither do the students pay any fees. The professors, however, are not debarred from taking private pupils, after the manner of an English parson or University tutor, and by these means and from

presents both they and the students maintain themselves. At present there are ten thousand students in the University; but it is to be feared that this does not so much argue a zeal for learning as a desire to escape the military conscription, which bears sometimes with cruel hardship upon a population so small as that of Egypt, and from which students in the national University are exempt.

I should be sorry, however, to be understood as implying that there is no thirst for learning among the Egyptians, and still less that there is any lack of a keen and intelligent appreciation of its value in these modern days. An American officer, of high rank in the service of the Khedive, informed me that the latter asked him, some time ago, "What impressed him as the most conspicuous defect in his army?" Said my countryman, in reply, "This, your Highness: that it is governed by civilians," and then went on to explain, as his meaning in making such an answer, that the officers of the army were generally unable to read and write, and were almost entirely dependent upon their clerks, who, although they were civilians, thus acquired and exercised an undue influence. The very

next day an order was issued making the ability to read and write an absolute condition of promotion in the military service; and in a little while this was followed by an order making all furloughs and other special privileges depend upon a similar condition. As a consequence, in a few weeks the entire army was turned into a school, and in a year from the date of this conversation there were exactly forty-five men in the whole Egyptian service who could neither read nor write. It is impossible to hear of one such fact without realizing how excellent must be the natural capabilities of a people who, after reaching adult years, can acquire knowledge so rapidly.

This digression has led me a little way from the topic to which I had meant to confine myself in this chapter—the Mosques of Cairo; and I have left myself room to speak only of one other, the Mosque of Hassaneyn, a very beautiful building and one of peculiar sacredness, from its containing as sacred relics the head of Hoseyn and the hand of Hasan. Into the Mosque of the Citadel, as well as some others, we had obtained admission without difficulty; but here, as also at the Mosque of Azhar, we were obliged to

procure a firman, and also the attendance of an officer from the *zaptieh*, or police station; and even then our application for admission was evidently not regarded with favor. Indeed, so far did this distrustful scrutiny go in the Mosque of Hassaneyn that one of the officers, after requesting me to uncover my head, repeated the request to a lady of the party who wore a very broad brimmed and rather conspicuous hat. I thought of quoting St. Paul on the indecorum of allowing women to be uncovered in the church, but distrusting the officer's knowledge of the English version, and being unable to give him the Arabic, I contented myself with a frown and a negative gesture, to which he yielded with the most cheerful good humor, as though he had simply been testing the readiness of the Frank to yield.

The mosque has recently been restored, and is a very perfect and exquisitely beautiful specimen of Oriental architecture. Its decorations in alabaster and in different colored marbles are especially rich, and the whole wore an air of elegance and refinement of decoration which are not common in Egyptian architecture. We lingered amid its beautiful rows of columns, and watched the

long lines of devotees either kneeling or standing in front of the shrines of El Hasan and El Hoseyn, until the declining rays of the sun reminded us that the day was drawing to its close, and that we must hasten, before darkness set in, to return to our hotel.

VII.

A Pilgrim Procession.

The Beginning of a Pilgrimage to Mecca—The Procession in the Streets of Cairo—Decay of Enthusiasm.

It is a piece of good fortune to see in Cairo any unusual ceremony in connection with the Mohammedan religion; for while it may be true that no direct attempts to weaken the hold of Mohammedanism upon its disciples

have been greatly successful, it is equally true that various indirect influences have conspired insensibly to modify and discourage the enthusiasm of its devotees. Year by year, therefore, the pomp and splendor of religious processions is diminishing, and it cannot be many years before many customs which are still in vogue among the more devout Moslems will have largely disappeared. I shall speak of the reasons for this further on, but I do not believe there is much doubt about the fact, and in view of it it was matter for congratulation that soon after our arrival in Cairo there occurred the day set apart for the annual departure of the pilgrims to Mecca.

This pilgrimage is made obligatory, at least once in a lifetime, upon every Mohammedan. It is, however, performed only by a small proportion of those persons who profess that faith, the larger number excusing themselves on the ground of domestic or business engagements, and wealthy people being in the habit of buying themselves off from the duty by various benefactions to the poor. The number who do go, however, is still so considerable as to make an imposing procession; and though when I saw it this procession was simply moving from the city to a point a few

miles without the walls, there to await the accretions which come to it daily until its departure, about two or three weeks later, it was already remarkable both for numbers and enthusiasm.

It was early in the day when we left our hotel to go to an open space near the Citadel, from which the procession starts. As we drove through the streets it was evident that the spectacle was one of general interest, for they were lined with throngs of people who stood or sat in groups or masses, arranged as picturesquely as if they had been placed for the study of a painter. It was a series of effects such as one could never hope to see at home. A crowd with us, and, above all, a street crowd, is as unwholesome an object, whether to the eye or ear, as one cares to meet with; but here there was no rough boisterousness and no bad costuming. Closely analyzed, there would have been found much less clothing and far more rags than with us; but even the water-carriers and fellah-women, whose whole drapery consisted of one ragged square of dirty blue or brown cotton cloth, managed to hang it about them with a combined grace and freedom which might well have been the envy of a sculptor and the

despair of a mantua-maker. Then the fascinating bits of color in scarf or *kaftan* or turban, common enough, perhaps, in texture, when closely examined, but somehow almost luminous in that clear Egyptian sunshine—all this went to make up a picture of mingled movement and repose so bright and warm and vivid that the eye could not delight in it enough.

We were soon to see something much more imposing, if not so brilliant. After a short drive our carriage stopped in the neighborhood of the Mosque of the Citadel, where, in an open pavilion, closed on three of its sides and open on the other, were arranged seats or thrones for the Khedive and for the two princes, his sons, as well as places for the officers of the government and other distinguished guests. Near these we found a group of the representatives of our own and foreign powers, and being placed near them we had leisure to take in the whole scene.

It was full of life, and to a stranger, of course, full of surprises. One by one the members of the household of the Khedive and of the Cabinet arrived and took their places amid a profusion of salaamings which were repeated till they became absurd. Most

of these personages were of the light yellow tint which is distinctive of the people of the Delta, and which is often pleasing to the eye when seen in connection with a rich Oriental costume; but among them there arrived an old gentleman whom a profane American near me characterized as an "out-and-out Fifteenth Amendment party," and whose color would have made an ebony statue turn pale. With his grizzled pate and Ethiopian features, and, worst of all, with the shambling, shuffling gait which seems to be a distinctive trait of the negro, he was a veritable Sambo; but we were rather surprised to hear that he was a conquered sovereign, whose domains the Khedive had "annexed," and who was passing the remainder of his days very much more comfortably than he ever lived before, doubtless, but rather ignominiously, nevertheless, as a state prisoner of the ruler of Egypt. He was received with every mark of ceremony, and conducted to a seat from which he stared at a scene that was scarcely less novel to him than to us.

We had not long to wait for the procession. A distant sound of drums, a stir among the crowd who fringed the street or stood clustered like bees upon the neighboring hillocks of sand

and rubbish, and we descried in the distance the approach of military, and the undulating movements of a number of people who were riding upon camels. A fragment of the procession, composed of shabbily-dressed pilgrims, soon after filed past us, and these were followed by more military and by a number of mounted men riding on the camels we had seen approaching, and beating the huge copper kettle-drums whose notes we had heard in the distance, and which were fastened to their saddles. Then there were more camels, some of them dyed with senna and some adorned with palms or bells. The hardships of the pilgrimage were expressively prefigured by water-skins borne by other camels; and other baggage, made necessary by the long stretches of travel across the desert, was loaded also upon camels. Of course, there were a considerable number of dervishes, who from the noise they made led us to believe that they belonged to the howling rather than the dancing denomination of that sect, and following these came some wild-looking Arabs, regular Bedouins, like those we had seen a few days before in the Mosque of the Citadel.

There was so much confusion and irregu-

larity in the movements of the procession that it was impossible to distinguish its various details even if it had not required a life-long acquaintance with Cairene Mohammedanism to have recognized them. We could see, however, that there was a gradual increase of splendor and solemnity, and of eager expectancy on the part of the people who were looking on, until suddenly, amid a shrill shout of excited enthusiasm, there swung or rolled into sight a huge structure, borne upon the back of a dromedary, which we were told was the covering for the tomb of the Prophet, on its way to be placed over his sacred resting-place at Mecca. This structure consisted of a square framework of wood with a pyramidal top, the whole having a cloth covering profusely embroidered with inscriptions in Arabic text, wrought in gold upon a ground of red or green silk, and ornamented with a silk fringe and tassels surmounted by silver bells. It contained nothing, we understood, but had fastened to its exterior two copies of the Koran, one in book form and the other written upon a scroll.

Nothing could exceed the reverence with which this structure was treated, or the eagerness with which the crowd pressed near to

see and, if possible, to touch it. It seemed perfectly reasonable, therefore, to think it, as we had been told that it was, the covering intended for the Prophet's tomb; but an authority whom, so far as I know, no one has as yet ventured to dispute—I mean the author of "The Modern Egyptians"—declares that this is a traveller's error, and that the *mahmal* (which is the name of the structure in question) has nothing to do with the tomb of the Prophet, but has very different and much less sacred associations. According to Lane, a beautiful Turkish female slave, who became wife of the Sultan Es-Sáleh-Negur-ed-Deen, and who, on the death of his son, caused herself to be acknowledged as Queen of Egypt, performed the pilgrimage to Mecca in a magnificent *hodág* (or covered litter) borne by a camel. This empty *hodág* was for several successive years sent with the caravan, merely to lend a little more state and dignity to the procession. It is very easy to see how such a custom grew into a fixed usage, the *hodág* becoming at length the emblem of royalty, and thus associating the sovereign in the minds of the people with a leading ceremony of the national religion.

I have no such knowledge as would war-

rant any distrust of this explanation of the *mahmal*, but it is difficult to believe that it is "only this and nothing more" that the common people see in it; for if the *mahmal* be nothing more than the Sultan's or Khedive's carriage, then there is a very curious difference between the veneration which the people have for the royal conveyance when borne by a camel and when drawn by a pair of English coach horses. I saw the Khedive driving about Cairo in an extremely well-appointed *coupé*, but a large proportion of his subjects did not even turn to look at it, and I am very sure that the most enthusiastic loyalist in Egypt never embraced its panels or kissed its wheels. Something else, then, than the impulse of homage to royalty drew forth those ardent demonstrations toward the *mahmal* which we saw among the Cairene spectators of the pilgrimage to Mecca, and it is hard to believe that they themselves had not come to cherish the impression that it had some very close association with the tomb of their Prophet.

At any rate, it was much the most conspicuous feature in the procession, excepting, perhaps, a mounted pilgrim whose extremely substantial outlines had little in common with

the ethereal interests of a religious devotee. This pilgrim was a dervish, who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca annually for thirty years, and who makes the whole journey in a state of perpetual motion and in a costume best expressed by the algebraic sign *minus*. Indeed, to his waist this gentleman presented the spectacle of unadorned nature, and as he was extremely fat, he reminded one, in his sitting posture, with his limbs drawn up, of the principal deity in a Chinese Joss-house. But what was chiefly noticeable was the incessant movement of the head and whole figure, from the waist up. This was produced by swaying or rather rolling the head and shoulders so as to make them describe, as nearly as possible, a circle, and with such constancy as must very soon have produced in any ordinary brain extreme dizziness. When to this was added the undulatory or rather jerky motion of the dromedary on which the devotee was seated, the whole was almost sufficient to make the mere spectator sea-sick. As to the condition in which, after forty successive days of such exercise, the dervish arrived at Mecca, one did not dare to speculate. If he had any intelligent capacity with which to perform his devotions it must

have been because, as was the belief of the old Greeks in regard to the affections, the lodging-place of his thinking powers was much nearer than is usual to the centre of his system.

Following the dervish there came several other camels laden with the luggage of the Emir-el-Hógg, or Chief of the Pilgrims, his litter, etc., and then one bearing the *khazneh*, or chest containing the money for defraying such expenses of the pilgrimage as fall upon the government. As this approached the pavilion in which we were seated, one of the princes advanced and placed a purse in the hand of its rider, at the same time kissing a sacred relic or charm which hung suspended from the neck of the dromedary. Then there followed some more military, and the usual crowd of boys and men, and the procession passed out of sight on its way to the extra-mural camp.

As it vanished, the reflection with which I began this letter instinctively recurred to the mind. I felt that it was a spectacle whose chances of repetition are annually diminishing. The age of religious pilgrimages has largely gone by, and though here and there, as in France lately, there may be a spasmodic

revival of such a custom, the amused curiosity with which even the great majority of sincerely religious people look on is an indication of the hopeless decay of the spirit which once inspired it. That spirit once burnt as ardently in the breasts of our forefathers as in the breast of the most enthusiastic Moslem to-day; but at the root of it there lay a faith in the religious efficacy of such pilgrimages which has long ago died out in Christian lands, and which is already dying in lands that are not Christian. When modern travellers can make a tour in what we have been wont to call the Holy Land the framework on which to construct a comic history of their adventures, we are somewhat rudely and painfully awakened to the fact that belief in the efficacy of a journey to sacred scenes and sacred places is wellnigh extinct, and that the world has come to understand that unless it has grasped the lesson of a good man's life, or mastered the meaning of his teachings, it will be of small avail that it makes pilgrimages to his tomb or says prayers to his ashes.

It may be said that these are western and not eastern ideas, and that there is no evidence that there is any decay of enthusiasm as to the annual pilgrimage to Mecca on the

part of the modern Egyptian. It would be answer enough to this to say that the most exact and careful observer of modern Egypt and its manners and customs—I mean the late Mr. Lane—begins his own account of the pilgrimage to Mecca by saying: "As this procession is conducted with *less pomp in almost every successive year*" (the italics are my own), "I shall describe it as I first witnessed it during my first visit to Egypt." But if there were no such testimony, it would be only necessary to compare the accounts of travellers written twenty years ago with what was to be seen in Cairo on the morning to which I refer. Indeed, I could not but think that to the devouter Oriental minds who were present with us on that November morning under the pavilion in the Citadel, the most conspicuous accessories of the spectacle must have been at once painful and offensive in their significance.

In the first place, the Khedive himself was conspicuous by his absence. A ceremony which every Mohammedan had been trained to regard as of profound import and solemnity was treated by him as having so little of either that he did not hesitate to neglect it for the merely routine duties of his office:

and the persons who represented him on the sacred occasion were, as it seemed to a looker-on, unconsciously but most expressively indicating their want of sympathy with the occasion and its surroundings. As they rolled up to the pavilion one after another, in their severely simple and sombre English carriages, with a smart English groom upon the box, and with an entire establishment which looked as if it had been transported complete from Hyde Park, one could not help wondering how it looked to those who had been accustomed to see royalty riding on white asses or mounted on an Arab barb. Then, too, the costumes of the Princes and Pashas, which were as hideously angular and European in cut and material as could be conceived, giving these dusky-skinned personages, with their single-breasted black frock-coats and trousers and red fezes, the effect of being a number of orthodox divines in rather fancy smoking-caps—what did it all mean but that the manners (that is, the ideas, for the two forever go together) of the West are insensibly but surely and steadily modifying those of the East, and that other and more sacred customs than those of dress and equipage will, erelong, decline and disappear before

the pushing and aggressive civilization of the Frank?

If, therefore, one would see the procession of the pilgrims to Mecca set forth from Cairo with any considerable part of its old splendor and ceremony, let him not postpone doing so too long; and when at length it shall become to the Mohammedan no more than such a memory as to-day the Crusades are to Christendom, let us hope that some worthier and loftier enthusiasm may permanently replace it.

VIII.

Shopping in Grand Cairo.

Queer Experiences of an American in the Mooskee.

There is a story told of a wide-awake American who, discovering in Paris some very pretty pencil cases at five francs apiece, bought a half dozen of them with the inten-

tion of using them as gifts to a few of the friends he had left behind him. They were made upon a simple but admirable mechanical principle, and, if not of solid gold, looked enough like it to answer the demands of ordinary criticism. Best of all, they had the charm to the eye of their purchaser of absolute novelty, and he drew a sigh of relief as he reflected that he had found something which inquisitive friendship at home had never even heard of. Reaching London on his way to New York, he was so fortunate as to find some more of them in a shop in Regent street, and it added to the satisfaction with which he bought them that the shopman there only asked him two shillings apiece for them. He eagerly bought another half dozen, and posted on to Liverpool to take ship for New York. Looking in at a shop window in Liverpool, while waiting for the hour when the steam-tug should leave Prince's dock, his eye fell upon some more pencil cases, and glad of an opportunity to reinforce his supply of an article for which he anticipated so considerable a demand, he entered the shop and began negotiations for one more half dozen. He had not caught the shopman's answer as to the price until

the parcel was made up and placed in his hand. Drawing out his purse, therefore, he gave him an expressively interrogatory look which immediately drew forth the reply, "Eighteen pence apiece, sir." "Singular," said our countryman, somewhat surprised, "but it seems that the further one gets from Paris the cheaper articles of Parisian manufacture become. Five francs apiece in Paris for these pencils, two shillings apiece in London, and eighteen pence in Liverpool. At this rate, I should have done better by waiting until I reached New York." "You are about right, sir," said the shopman, who by this time had his money safe in his till. "You are about right, sir, for them pencils is all made in the States."

The incident has an admonitory value as indicating the danger of buying anything abroad on the theory that it is unknown at home. In the matter of shops and their contents, Paris, London, and New York are wellnigh one, and it requires a sharp eye and an ample experience to discover anything in either of them that you may not find for sale in both the others.

The traveller goes to the bazaars in Cairo, however, with the comfortable feeling that

Cairo is neither Paris, London, nor New York. To buy something there, he fully imagines, is to secure that which will have, at least, the charm of rarity. It is not unlikely that, when he gets home again, he will find himself mistaken; for, after all, the world is very small, and the products of Egypt and Syria are well-known commodities to our American commercial world; but, notwithstanding this, shopping in Cairo has a fascination apart from what is bought, and any one who has neglected the *Mooskee* has missed one of the most characteristic experiences of eastern travel. The *Mooskee* is the shopkeeping quarter, and twisting through it are the narrow labyrinths in which some of the most exquisite textures which Oriental handiwork can fashion are to be bought.

Nothing could be more opposed to our notion of shops and shopping than what one sees and does here. It shocks one's sense of fitness to find dirt and artistic excellence (and much that is sold in the bazaars at Cairo has not a little of artistic excellence) so close together.; but dirt is the dominating element in the Cairene bazaars. The street is simply a dusty alley, without the semblance of a

pavement or the remotest suspicion of having ever been swept or cleaned. The fine sand of which it is formed is made into a paste three or four times a day by the activity of the Arab water-carriers, who, with their hog-skins upon their shoulders, give you the impression that they are carrying the bloated carcass of a dead pig. Into this paste are tramped the sweepings of shops and every other imaginable and unimaginable impurity which the broad hoofs of camels and the sharp heels of donkeys have, year after year, conspired to grind into a conglomerate that will one day be the despair of the geologist of the future. As you walk through it or over it you are reminded, moreover, that you have not all the dirt of Cairo under foot, but that a very large share of it forms a circulating medium which is kept constantly in active movement upon the persons of its people. These jostle against you or are crowded into your unwilling embrace by a dense mass of moving life, composed of human beings of all ages and conditions, and quadrupeds, from the slouching, encrusted and unmannerly dromedary, who ignores your right of way with the most serene contempt, all the way to the most miserable species of dog which

can possibly exist outside of Constantinople. Above your head, as you look up to escape the constant succession of blind, maimed, and unfortunate people who clamor as long as you are in sight for *backsheesh*, you observe that a ricketty, modern framework extends across the street from roof to roof, on which are loosely laid wooden slats to shut out the mid-day sun. It adds to your composure to see that most of these slats have been displaced by the wind, and that a breath of air, apparently, will be sufficient to send them rattling down from a height of fifty feet upon your head.

At such a moment you turn to the threshold of the shop to which you have been led, in the hope that there at least you will find something more attractive; but even the shop is, or seems to be, a shabby imposture. It is only a wretched hole in the wall, and its entire resources seem to be a half-dozen pieces of dusty stuff-goods. You look long enough to take in the situation and turn to walk away in disgust. Your dragoman, however, mildly begs that you will not be impatient. "Seat yourself," he entreats, "upon the divan"—which is simply the edge of the raised platform that forms the floor of the

shop (on which, meanwhile, the proprietor is sitting with an air often of profound indifference)—"and make known your wants." You wish to see some shawls. Your wish is translated to the merchant, and he rises, evincing now at length something of affable alacrity, and produces from some recess behind him a bundle. This is placed before you, and with abundant deliberation he extracts from it and unfolds before you a—table-cover. For an instant it arrests your attention, and you look at it, especially if it be something unfamiliar, with a faint sign of interest. You are not going to housekeeping in Cairo, and you remind your dragoman that you asked not for table-cloths but for shawls. This being laboriously explained to the merchant, he smiles assentingly, and immediately produces another package of table-cloths, much rarer and handsomer than the others. "No! No!" you say impatiently, determined not to be lured in this way into unintentional extravagance, "shawls!" "shawls!" At once the table-cloths are shoved aside, and the merchant places another parcel before you, containing embroidered jackets. Cunning wretch! It is as if he had been secretly advised of your weakness. As you have

watched the gay equipages of his Highness the Khedive, and of the pashas who are attached to the court, nothing has impressed you so much as the rich and picturesque dress of the *seis*, or runner (most of the handsomer equipages preceded by two), whose fleet feet and sharp cries have announced their approach. Now, much the most splendid part of the dress is the embroidered jacket, which may easily be made a striking feature of feminine costume; and so you are in the toils, before you know it. One after another these gay and graceful vestments are turned over; in a few moments half a dozen have been put aside "on approbation," and the chances are a thousand to one that you will not be allowed to escape without taking them with you.

The indulgence of this momentary weakness has, however, the usual effect of making you resolve upon unswerving firmness in the future. Once more you cry *shall! shall!* (shawls! shawls!) in a tone as imperious as you can command. It makes no difference. When this placid Oriental has shown you everything that he has to sell, has exhausted every opportunity of inducing you to buy what you do not want, then he will produce

what you ask for. At this point the contest assumes an entirely new character. You not only want a shawl, but a handsome one. Apparently, however, the dealer prefers to keep his handsome shawls and sell only those that are inferior. Of course this is a part of eastern artifice, but underneath it there must exist, I think, something of that preference to cling to values in kind, which is so distinctive of Oriental ideas of wealth. I shall not soon forget an afternoon which was passed before the shelves of a Cairene merchant whose whole stock in trade apparently consisted of two insignificant piles of cheap shawls, but who proved to be possessed of rarest fabrics of exquisite beauty, both of pattern and texture. If we had been drawing his teeth, one by one, he could not have surrendered them with greater reluctance than he evinced in producing his goods; and when my companion turned away at length without making any purchase, my own relief at the conclusion of the negotiations was not greater than that with which the shawl-dealer put away his goods and saw his chance of exchanging them for English sovereigns vanishing in the distance. To his view British gold had, apparently, a more doubtful value than his

precious goods, and his consciousness of wealth was far deeper when turning them over on his shelves than in rattling any amount of money in his pocket.

The first, and possibly the second, experience of this kind has in it enough that is at once novel and amusing to make it at least endurable; but when one has many purchases to make, and only a short time in which to make them, it becomes an almost intolerable vexation; for when one has found the things he wants, the business of fixing upon their price and paying for them becomes a matter not merely of hours, but sometimes of days. The dealer invariably names a price which is double or treble the amount which he will accept, or which he expects you to pay. Then comes the chaffering and huckstering in which eastern shopkeepers take such keen delight. You offer half what he asks, and he at once places the article in your hand, saying, "Take it, it is a gift," which is simply an expressive way of telling you that that is what your proposition would substantially amount to. Then there follows the pantomime of silent departure on the one side, and glances of reproachful entreaty on the other. You turn to go, and have reached

the middle of the street, when you hear some one crying: "Three hundred piasters!" You had been asked four hundred at first, and had offered two. Thus reluctantly, and not until your morning has been wellnigh consumed, the merchant comes to terms, and you secure, at an expense of some hours' wrangling, what you could have purchased at home in ten minutes. A friend was waited upon at our hotel by an East India merchant, who brought with him several parcels of handsome goods. A selection was made from them of a number of articles, and the prices of them taken down from his lips, and added up in his presence. The sum total was rather large, and there is no doubt that he had not the slightest expectation of receiving it. He was offered one third, and refused it indignantly, retiring almost immediately with his parcels. I confess I thought the offer too little, and did not wonder that he refused it; but the event proved how little I was acquainted with the ways of the eastern tradesman. The negotiation went on for nearly a week—the dealer coming and going with a patience which was wholly unintelligible to a western mind; but at the end of that time he did what he meant

to do all along, and accepted the sum originally offered him.

There is undoubtedly much in all this that is vexatious to persons to whom it is unfamiliar, but it is somewhat hasty to pronounce it, as many do, intentionally dishonest. As I have intimated, a large element of the charm of traffic with these people is the encounter of wits for which it affords an opportunity, and in addition to this it must not be forgotten that, in the matter of those things especially which the traveller buys, there is not that close competition which so definitely fixes prices with us. Curiously-carved ivory, rare patterns in rugs and scarfs, odd devices in brass, silver, or gold, have a fluctuating value according to the necessities of the dealer and the enthusiasm of the buyer. We are familiar enough at home with the same thing in connection with pictures, horses, and the like, and with us no one accounts a man dishonest because he chooses to put a "fancy" price upon his corner house or his country place, and then to take for either of them half as much as he asked at the beginning.

It is in amusing inconsistency with these Oriental customs of buying and selling that

one sometimes meets with an ingenious method by which the trader who makes his successive abatements saves at the same time his pride. A friend who was in search of antique coins, *scarabæi*, and the like, found in the possession of a shrewd Moslem a collection from which about half a dozen articles of different value were selected. The price demanded for them was twelve pounds sterling, and the sum offered was exactly half that amount. Then ensued a scene in which wrangling, scuffling—everything, in fact, short of downright blows—formed a part. We were accompanied by a friend of the dealer's, who acted as interpreter, and who incontinently seized the desired articles, and laying down six sovereigns started to walk off with them. At once the dealer closed with him, and the two wrestled for their possession with a vehemence of speech and gesture which threatened a more violent contention. It was all purely dramatic. Suddenly the dealer ceased his struggles, placed a certain number of the coins and *scarabæi* in the hand of our attendant, and said, "These for six pounds;" and then, pausing a moment, added with a reproachful air, as he surrendered the rest, "These a present."

There is one aspect of buying and selling in Egypt which is not without an element of pathos. It is a country in which everything is for sale. The rich are so very few, and the desperately poor are so many, that it rarely happens that you see anything that cannot be bought. Passing a hovel you see a woman "grinding at a mill," the very same mill which is referred to in the New Testament, consisting of two stones, of which the upper turns upon that beneath, and at which the woman sits wearily turning, as one may see represented in sculptures six thousand years old. Unconscious of observation she has dropped her veil, and her face is exposed. It is a face (I am describing what I happened to see) full of intelligence, vivacity—I had almost said of refinement; and yet it is disfigured by a nose-ring suspended from one nostril, but so balanced as to seem to hang from both. On the ring, which is nearly two inches in diameter and of gold, are suspended one or two little gold balls and a few coins. It is probably the whole sum of her worldly wealth, for as you look about you you perceive that her surroundings are those of utter squalor and extremest poverty. Possibly it was her dowry, and not improbably it is an

hereditary treasure, the one single ornament which her mother wore, and which may have been passed on from generation to generation with increasing reverence and care; but she will sell it—or rather she must sell it; for although she refuses your offer at first, her necessities constrain her to accept it in the end, and as you felicitate yourself upon having secured an ornament at once curious and really valuable, you will be very insensible if your elation is not a little qualified by the reflection that you may have stripped another of the last relic of personal adornment, as well as the last memento of ancestral prosperity.

IX.

The Nile Voyage.

The Pleasures and the Perils of the Journey—Nile Boats and their Crews—The Value of a Dragoman.

In Eliot Warburton's "The Crescent and the Cross," there is an account of the boat in which he left Alexandria for a voyage up the Nile, and of the preliminary arrangements which at that time—nearly forty years ago—such a voyage required.

Before the construction of the railway between Alexandria and Cairo it was customary to begin the Nile voyage at the former port, but modern impatience has gladly seized upon a pretext for abridging one of the most delightful experiences in the world, and at present, the traveller who proposes to pass a part or the whole of his Winter upon the Nile almost invariably begins his journey at

Cairo. Within a few years the Khedive has completed a railway to Asyoot, which is about two hundred and fifty miles above Cairo, on the way to the first cataract, and it is surprising that some enterprising personage has not already adopted the plan of making the voyage begin from this point. It would have at least the advantage of eliminating from the daily hearing of the voyager the shrieking and rumbling of the railway, which at present deprives, by its constant proximity, the first ten days of his journey southward of much of that charm which consists in the sense of isolation from all the noise and bustle of the busy world.

Of course, however, it is the interest of the owners of the *dahabeehs* which sail up the Nile every Winter to let them for as long a period as possible, and therefore Cairo is still the main port from which such craft take their departure, though a few are still taken at Alexandria. It is customary for the boats to lie at Boulak, which is simply a suburb of Cairo, answering the purpose of a port. Thither the voyager up the Nile early finds his way—the earlier the better; for there are only about fifty or sixty boats at all fit to pass one's Winter in, and the best of these are

often engaged months or even a year beforehand by letter from England or the United States.

The minutest details of life on the Nile have been so often described, and as a part of them the curious specimen of naval architecture known as a *dahabeeh*, that I shall not venture to rehearse what is doubtless already abundantly familiar to every one of my readers; but recent events have lent a melancholy and tragic interest to such a voyage, and it may not be superfluous to say something of those changes in the construction of the *dahabeeh* which, it is to be feared, have contributed to prepare the way for such events. When Warburton ascended the Nile the traveller's *dahabeeh* was a craft about thirty-five feet long, and, with a cabin, at most about four feet high. Since then the luxurious demands of modern travel have gradually lengthened these boats, until now they are built, in some instances, one hundred and twenty-five feet long, and with cabins eight feet in the clear. This would make little difference, perhaps, if the size of the huge lateen-sail did not go on increasing with the length of the boat, until now the task of handling and controlling such a sail

may easily become a very serious one. In order to pull any craft up the Nile against its tremendous current the sail must be a large one, and when almost the entire force of the wind presses upon this sail at one single point it is quite impossible that the rope, or "sheet," which stays or holds the sail at this point, should be controlled by a single sailor. In the infallible Murray, and in the journals, published and unpublished, of many travellers, great stress is laid upon the necessity of guarding against sudden flaws of wind, which, when sailing in the neighborhood of mountains, are liable to strike the sail and so capsize the boat. This danger is supposed to be sufficiently met by inserting in the contract a provision that, when sailing, one of the crew shall always hold the rope or sheet which stays the main-sail in his own hands, so as to be able to let it fly, and so ease the sail at a moment's warning; but, as a matter of fact, this is, as I have intimated, quite impossible. The sailor has to run the rope through a ring and knot it in order to control it at all, and this knot has to be undone and the rope extricated from the ring before the sail can be released. But it is easy to see that in the few seconds neces-

sary for this a boat may heel over, and may utterly fail to recover herself.

This undoubtedly was the explanation of the catastrophe which has saddened all voyagers upon the Nile this Winter, and which cost the lives of three young girls, who were drowned without an instant's warning. The sympathy which has been everywhere felt for their friends will be especially keen among Americans, in behalf of that kindly and accomplished English gentleman, their kinsman, Mr. Russell Gurney, whose temporary residence in the United States (as one of the Commission upon the Alabama Claims) has made him known and honored in our country as well as his own.

It would be a pity if such an accident were allowed to be forgotten without at least an effort to direct attention to the warning which it utters. I do not know that Americans need that warning more than others, but I have ventured to give it. It is simply that it is not wise to travel in boats which are too large and unwieldy, and which are built with an undue reference to speed. With us it is comparatively a small matter whether a cabin be five feet high or twice as much, provided the height is gained by sink-

ing the cabin floor below the water line; but on the Nile, one of the first conditions of a good boat is that she should not draw more than eighteen inches or two feet of water. If, therefore, the saloon and cabins are to have much elegance in the way of height, they must secure it at the cost of pushing the whole structure so high into the air as to make it, in a high wind, unwieldy and top-heavy. If to this is added such narrowness in the waist as has lately characterized many of the iron boats built in England and brought to the Nile, it is easy to see that in sailing up the river a boat may be in considerable danger of capsizing.

From all this it follows that safety and comfort are equally secured by avoiding boats which are too long, too narrow, and too high out of water. Of course, if the boats are made of sufficient breadth the dangers or discomforts I have indicated may be avoided; but the larger boats (those, I mean, of more than one hundred feet in length, with proportionate width) are so unwieldy as to make it difficult to get them above the first cataract; and in coming down the river their bulk is a hindrance to their drifting, so that the traveller who has allowed

himself a pretty liberal margin of time for his voyage finds himself sometimes in danger of using it all up before he gets half way back to Cairo.

There is a very animated competition among the boat-owners at Cairo, between the native boats and those of foreign build. The joiners' work of the latter, and their minor conveniences, are generally superior, and they are supposed to be cleaner; but the native boats are apt to be faster, and some of them are very excellent. The thing of chief importance is to secure a boat which has not been used for freighting purposes, and which stands, therefore, a reasonable chance of being free from vermin.

In engaging a *dahabeeh* the captain (or *reis*), mate, steersman, and crew go with the boat, and all these are put, by the terms of the usual contract in such cases, under the absolute command of the hirer—that is to say, the boat is to sail when the traveller orders it to sail, and to stop only when he has indicated that it may stop. In order to make his authority something more than a mere semblance of power, the contract provides that the hirer may, at any point in the journey, and for any reason that may seem to

him good, discharge the entire crew, including the *reis*, and employ another. Such a provision has probably been made necessary by the endeavors of the captains and crews needlessly to delay the boat upon any frivolous pretext for the sake of spinning out the term of their own engagements. It will be readily seen that this contingency might be avoided by engaging a boat and her crew for the "round trip," with an agreement to pay a fixed sum for the same, be it longer or shorter in time; but it has been found in practice that this offers a temptation to captains and crews to "rush" a boat up and down the river, and by sailing or rowing at night to deprive the traveller of devoting so much time by the way to sight-seeing, and the like, as he wishes. The arrangement by the day or month, therefore, is generally preferred, and the provision giving the traveller absolute command of the *reis* and crew is usually inserted for his protection.

It is questionable, however, whether it does not confer a greater authority than many travellers can safely use. If the idea is once lodged in the mind of the hirer that the *reis* and crew are strongly interested in prolonging his journey, every suggestion looking to

delay will be regarded with suspicion. What, then, is the traveller to do? it may be asked. Is he to give himself up into the hands of fifteen or twenty Arab and Nubian sailors, to be dealt with according to their cunning, or indolence, or caprice? On the contrary, I am disposed to think he will do better to give himself up to the cunning of *one* Oriental, and be guided largely by his counsel, doubtless not unmixed with cunning also.

In other words, I fancy that the main secret of enjoying a Winter of genuine rest and change on the Nile is to secure a good dragoman, and to leave yourself largely in his hands. I am not unmindful in saying this that our countryman in those "Nile Notes of an Howadji," which are, perhaps, the most charming of all contributions to what may be called the literature of the Nile, has written that "the dragoman is of four species: the Maltese, or the able knave; the Greek, or the cunning knave; the Syrian, or the active knave; and the Egyptian, or the stupid knave;" but, after all, the dragoman, like most other people who have to earn their living, is largely dependent in doing so upon a fair reputation for honesty and upright dealing. Undoubtedly, many people are easily

deceived on the Nile, as well as elsewhere; but even in Cairo it sooner or later comes to be understood that there are some men—Syrians, Greeks, Egyptians, and even Maltese—who can safely be trusted, and whose interest it is to deal fairly and candidly with the traveller.

And so, before engaging one's boat it is wise to engage one's dragoman. Any one can readily ascertain before leaving home the names of those in good repute, or if not, then our own or the English consul in Cairo, the leading bankers there, and the manager of the principal inn, may all be relied upon as candid and judicious counsellors in such an emergency.

In engaging either a dragoman or a *dahabeeh* the question of expense is one which must concern many persons who are in search of health or rest. It is undoubtedly true that the charges are needlessly high, and that abundant comfort could be secured at a much less expense than is usual. As it is, a party of six can secure a fair boat for $1,375 for a period of three months, and a dragoman for $25 a day, for the party. This would make the cost of a Winter on the Nile $3,625 for six persons, or about $625 apiece.

Of course, there is no allowance here for money given away as *backsheesh*, or spent in purchasing Manchester-made coins supposed to have been dug up at Thebes or Abydos. But then, on the other hand, it includes board and lodging, light, fuel, and washing, together with all travelling expenses on land or water for the whole period. And even this expense might be considerably lessened if the dragoman could understand that the ordinary traveller does not need or desire to be nourished upon such a scale of wanton extravagance as prevails upon many Nile boats.

Both guide books and travellers are profuse in counsels as to certain necessaries which must be brought to Egypt from a distance, and equally so as to certain minor comforts which the Nile boats do not possess, nor the ordinary dragoman have any knowledge of. But I think, nevertheless, that it would be entirely safe to entrust one's self to a competent dragoman, and to confide in the resources of the shops of Cairo. It would be very curious if, after more than half a century of foreign travel up and down the Nile, much of it being the travel of the most exacting tourists in the world—I mean the English—both the dragoman and the Cairene shopkeeper had

not learned the wants and tastes of the Frank. Even the Khedive's postal system is now an excellent one, and the voyager on the Nile may find a telegraph line all the way to the borders of Abyssinia, if he has the curiosity and the courage to go there. I mention these things because it is not uncommon to encumber one's self with many articles brought from a distance, all of which can be found on the spot. For instance, we were bidden to secure an American flag in Paris; but we found a voluble Frenchman in the *Mooskee* who was abundantly familiar with both the form and colors of the *drapeau Americain*, and though he showed us material of one quality, and charged us for it, while making up our flags, as we subsequently discovered, of another and inferior quality, there is no certainty that we might not have had the same experience if we had made our purchase in the Rue de la Paix.

The modern *dahabeeh* is a spacious and thoroughly-convenient vessel, with a main saloon about fifteen feet by twenty, and four state-rooms, two double and two single. In addition to these is a smaller saloon in the stern, which may be used as a bedroom or sitting room. At first view one is struck with

the comparative crudeness and primitiveness of the wood-work and decorations; but a closer inspection shows the boats to be, on the whole, admirably adapted for the comfort and convenience of the passengers.

One of the chief curiosities of these boats is the kitchen, which consists of a hole about three feet square in the forward part of the deck, with a mud fireplace on one side of it. Here the cook presides, working absolutely in the open air, and with only a frail wooden hood or shed over his fire. A more hopeless-looking contrivance one could not well imagine; and it is hard to realize that any but the crudest and most meagre results can be produced with so scanty and primitive conveniences. And yet a friend whose establishment includes a kitchen thirty feet square, with a French range and a French artist in front of it, declared unhesitatingly that no such results were ever produced in some of the most famous inns in Paris. Some such assurance was really needed on a first view of our *dahabeeh* kitchen.

A further perplexity which naturally occurred in looking over our little craft was as to the accommodations of the crew. There was abundance of space for the four or five

passengers, but where were the fifteen or twenty men (the usual number is nearer the latter than the former) who comprise the working staff of the vessel to be stowed at night? The problem was solved after a very short and easy fashion, when we were informed that each man, including the *reis*, and excepting one, or at most two, of the servants, was accustomed to lie down upon the deck just where he had been working or watching, and, rolling himself in his mat or shawl, to sleep soundly in the open air. Then we remembered, what it is so hard to remember at first, that it does not rain in Egypt, and that the Winter range of the thermometer is rarely below forty-five degrees.

One of the most unique and picturesque features of the *dahabeeh* is its deck, especially when arranged with awnings, rugs, and divans. The soft, warm air of many of the Winter days in Egypt makes it possible for the voyager to pass a large part of the time on deck, and the deck and its belongings are admirably arranged for this purpose. One could understand, when pacing it for the first time, how perfect must be the repose of days passed in sailing thus through scenes of perpetual interest, amid a stillness and retirement

upon which nothing could intrude. Even the unwonted costumes and unfamiliar forms and customs of the dusky crew whom we found in possession of our *dahabeeh* when we first visited it formed an additional charm; and full of interest as Cairo has been to us, we find ourselves looking forward with something of eager impatience for the day on which our voyage shall begin. We are told by persons versed in the superstitions of the Arabs, that whatever day that may be, it must not be Wednesday, which, according to Mohammedan traditions, is an unlucky day; and at once we realize that our voyage is to be embarrassed by both Christian and Moslem superstition—for nobody wants to set out on Friday; and one who, for two or three months, is to be comparatively at the mercy of a score of impulsive Arabs, will be equally reluctant to disregard the fears which would forbid their starting on Wednesday. Indeed, we determined, whether disregarding our own superstitions or not, to be careful to respect theirs—a determination which was at least prudent, if not courageous.

X.

Coptic Customs.

An American at a Double Wedding among the Egyptian Christians.

It is not often that one gets a chance to attend a Copt wedding Indeed, I presume we should not have assisted at one if it had not been for a fortunate accident. But here, as before, I was indebted to the untiring energy of an English friend, who, having been constantly occupied since sunrise, proposed one evening, just at dusk, that we should go and see a Copt church, in which there was a chance of finding a sort of vesper service.

It will imply, I trust, no disrespect to any American reader if I venture to recall the fact that the name "Copt" stands for the ancient Christian Church of Egypt, and that the Coptic Christians of to-day assert that

they are the lineal descendants of the people who first listened to the preaching of the religion of the New Testament from the lips of St. Mark himself. In the Coptic cathedral in Alexandria is shown the spot, beneath its altar, where the body of St. Mark is supposed to rest. History—at any rate, western tradition, as persons who have been in Venice will remember—tells a different story, and affirms that the body of the Evangelist was transported, centuries ago, to the crypt of the cathedral of St. Mark, in Venice, where, in a similar position beneath its altar, they are now reposing. I shall not attempt to reconcile these statements, which do not either of them affect the undoubted fact that the Coptic Christians are a body of people inheriting certain articles of Christian belief curiously mixed up with both Mohammedan and Jewish customs. It is not surprising that this should be so; indeed, it was rather surprising, on conversing with the Copts themselves, to find how much that was essential to the Christian faith they had succeeded in preserving. Overlaid as they have been for so many centuries by the dominant, and not always tolerant, influences of the Moslem faith, it is wonderful to find anything left beyond the

mere husks of certain traditional rites. I mention this because, in what I may have to say, my readers may be tempted to forget that I am describing what is called in Egypt a Christian ceremonial.

On arriving at the court of the Copt church, which, like that in Alexandria, has for its patron saint St. Mark, we found that its doors were closed, and that the services for the day were over. We were just about sending for the keys in order to view the building, when a friend of our dragoman entered the court or enclosure within which the church is hidden away at some distance from the street, and informed him that a Coptic wedding was about to take place in the neighborhood, and suggested that possibly we might like to see it. We demurred a little at this proposed intrusion upon the private festivities of a family with whose acquaintance we were not honored, but being assured that they would be gratified by the attendance of any friends of their friend, we allowed ourselves to be led away, and in a few moments found ourselves ascending to the third floor of a spacious house in which, in a rather small room, the wedding ceremonies were to take place.

As I have said, my companion was a clergyman of the Established Church of England, and, with that attachment to the customs of his own land which is so universal a characteristic of his countrymen, he straightway began to inquire how it was that so important a service as a wedding was to be celebrated in a private house. "Why are not your people married in church?" he demanded of his Coptic companion, to whom we were indebted for our invitation.

"Frequently they are," was the answer.

"But is it not always so?"

"No."

"But surely it is better to be married in church. Do not your people think so?"

"Yes."

"Why, then, in the name of all that is reverent, are they not always married in church?"

Whereupon it came out that to be married in church was a somewhat expensive process, as it involved the payment of several considerable fees for the opening of the church, the musical part of the services, lights, incense, etc. On hearing this my clerical companion expressed his extreme surprise and dissatisfaction, and, by way of making our hospitable

Copt companion feel as uncomfortable as possible, went on to say: "In the Church to which this gentleman (pointing to me) and I belong, all the services of the Church are entirely free, and any body can have the church opened for any service that he wishes to have performed, without its costing him a single piaster." Unfortunately, I was unable to confirm this statement, so far as the ecclesiastical customs of my own country were concerned, and it was hard to say which was the most amusing, the expression of dismay with which my companion found that he was alone in his boast, or the gleam of quiet satisfaction which flitted across the face of the Copt when he found that the customs of his own Church were no worse than those in America.

When we entered the room in which the marriage ceremonies were to take place, we found that extensive preparations were already making, and that there was to be a double wedding; two young men, brothers, were about to be married at the same time. This accounted for the number of priests who were present, and to these, three in all, we were straightway presented with much ceremony. "Tell them, Hassan," said my friend, who, I am bound to add, was a mis-

sionary of the "Church Missionary Society" of the English Church (which name, to persons who know the traditions of that Society, will be a sufficient guaranty of his freedom from what are called "extreme" views, whatever they may be), "tell them that we are both priests of sister Churches, and that we are very glad to be here to-day." This point being reiterated and explained by our interpreter, we were placed, with considerable formality, upon the divan on which the priests were seated, and an attendant approached to offer us refreshments. These consisted, first, of a sort of rose-water, served in colored glasses with covers richly gilded. There was a slight smell of oil as the cup was raised to one's lips, but the beverage itself was very pleasant to the taste, and the whole thing, including the salver on which the glasses were borne, the costume of the attendant who bore it, and the salutations with which it was tendered, consisting of the triple gesture toward the lips, head, and heart, which is so universal in the East, was extremely fascinating. It was not less so when, after we had emptied our glasses, they were taken from us by a deacon who attended upon the clergy, and who, upon receiving

them, took the extended hand with which we returned them in both his own, and kissed it gently on both sides. My companion observed in a whisper, with dry humor, that, "whatever might be the heresies of the Coptic Church (which readers of ecclesiastical history will readily recall in connection with what is known as the Eutychian schism), its manners were very taking." But he recalled the remark the next moment, when he found that having been refreshed with rose-water he was expected to join his clerical companions in a cigarette. This he declared it impossible to do, and for some time I found myself regarded with favor because I evinced no hostility to a little very mild tobacco. After tobacco came coffee, and during all this time we were engaged in obtaining such information as we could through an interpreter, both concerning the approaching ceremony and concerning the ecclesiastical customs of the Copts generally.

My companion, anxious that the Coptic clergy present should thoroughly appreciate the office of their guests, favored them with a short lecture on ecclesiastical history, which ended, however, in an unlooked-for manner. Said he, "Tell them, Hassan, that we have

Bishops, too;" which was duly communicated. Whereupon the three priests bowed their heads and murmured something in unison. "What do they say, Hassan?" impatiently demanded my companion. "They say," said Hassan, "'It is well; God be praised!'" Whereupon my friend, eager to deepen the favorable impression which he concluded he had made, went on: "Tell them, Hassan, that my companion is the son of a Bishop." This, also, was duly translated into Arabic by our facile attendant; whereupon, much to my friend's surprise, the countenances of the three priests immediately fell, and for a few moments wore an expression in which grave disapprobation was evidently struggling with courtesy. "What do they say to that, Hassan?" again demanded my friend, with increased impatience; whereupon, after a long and somewhat animated statement from the senior of the priests, accompanied by many deprecating gestures, our interpreter hesitatingly informed us that they had observed that they had never heard of such a thing, and that it was *not* well; on hearing which my friend, tardily remembering his ecclesiastical history, whispered, "Why, of course, I ought to have recollected that their Bishops, like those of

the Greek Church, are chosen from the monastic orders—do not marry, and, of course, have no sons," upon which I mildly ventured to suggest that, thereafter, he might better let well enough alone, and forbear from any further efforts to impress our hosts with our ecclesiastical importance.

It was during these more or less complimentary exchanges that a sort of small altar had been arranged in the centre of the room, on which stood, as its most conspicuous object, a folio copy of the Gospels in Coptic, enclosed in a solid silver case, richly decorated and rather dirty. This was lifted from its place in the centre of the table and brought to us for our inspection. Here my companion saw an opportunity of rehabilitating himself in the good opinion of the priests, and, taking the volume, or casket, he first reverently kissed it, and then, lifting it to his head and allowing it to rest there for an instant, returned it to the hands of the deacon. It seems that this was an Oriental way of testifying respect for the sacred volume, and I, awkwardly, but promptly, imitated it. Nothing could have been more opportune as a means of accomplishing what my friend desired. It was evident that the priests were greatly impressed, and a few mo-

ments afterward the deacon communicated to our interpreter a request from the clergy that we would assist them in the service—an invitation, which, somewhat to my dismay, my companion promptly accepted.

At this moment there was a noise in the street without, and we were informed that it was intended to announce the approach of the two bridegrooms. We went to the windows, and leaning out saw a sight not easily forgotten. The narrow street was crowded with men, women, and boys, and winding up the court which led to the house from which we looked down upon it was a procession, composed of a band of music preceded by *cawasses* (or policemen) and followed by the bridegrooms and their friends. The band was playing with the utmost vigor, and as it was composed of several reeds which gave only two or three notes of an intensely shrill quality, and some drums which produced a rattling, rasping sound, the effect was simply deafening. Add to this the glare of the torches, the eager movement of gayly-dressed figures, and the shouts and cries of the surging crowd of lookers-on, and the whole produced a confusion of light and sound that almost made one dizzy. At this moment, I

lifted my eyes for an instant to the dark face of a building almost directly opposite me, and hanging from the windows of its various stories, like bees, were groups of Mohammedan women, whose scorn or hatred of the faith of the Copt could not make them indifferent to that most interesting of events, a wedding. In their excitement or curiosity many of them had dropped their veils, and I was a good deal surprised at the intelligence and vivacity of their expressions. As a matter of fact, the Mohammedan women are vastly more ignorant than the men, and are rarely allowed to acquire any knowledge of even the simplest rudiments of learning. These women, indeed, were little more than children, and it was, after all, with more of the glee of children than anything higher that their faces were for the moment illumined. Even that gleam of enjoyment, however, it was pleasant to see, and I felt equally vexed with their master (or husband, as I presume he was) and with myself when I saw that my chance scrutiny had been observed by him, and had led to his angrily driving them into the darkness of the rear apartment. In a few moments they were back, however, and, with their veils carefully arranged, watched the remainder of the scene in the street.

This ended as soon as the two bridegrooms had fairly crossed the threshold. The band departed for the brides, and the two brothers were a moment afterward ushered into the apartment to await their coming. The young gentlemen were arrayed in partly European and partly Oriental costume, the mixed effect of which was neither dignified nor becoming. They were very affable, however, and kissed our hands in the most devout and filial fashion. Soon after their entrance the precentor or choir-leader appeared, and with him the youthful deacons and choir-boys who were to perform the musical part of the service. One of these young gentlemen, discovering our presence, immediately attached himself to me as a sort of interpreter of the significance of the several details of the service, keeping up an animated conversation in broken but very graphic English. I found he had been taught English in the Coptic school, and that he had, apparently, but one ambition, and that was to improve his idioms and his pronunciation. A brighter boy I never met in my life, and if he follows out his intention, as communicated to me that evening, and studies medicine, I predict that the Copts in Cairo will have at least one very good doctor.

The deacons and choir-boys had brought their vestments with them, and robed with an amount of giggling, pushing, and whispering which indicated that they were very much like their professional brothers all over the world. Their vestments consisted of a sort of surplice (which might easily have been cleaner), over which they wore a stole or scarf, carried over the shoulders and around the waist, and made of striped silk, the predominant colors being yellow and green. The priests' vestments were more ornate, but were tawdry and rusty looking, at the same time. In form, they resembled those worn by the clergy of the Roman Church. When the clergy and assistants were habited, the subdeacon lighted some candles which were arranged in a curious candlestick, having some remote resemblance to a Greek cross, which stood upon the table behind the silver case containing the Gospels. As their light fell on the imprisoned volume standing below and in front of them, I noticed, for the first time, that the silver case was so riveted together that there was, apparently, no way of obtaining access to that which it enclosed; and on approaching nearer and examining more, closely, I found there was nothing to

show that the casket had been opened for a generation. One could not help wondering whether this curious fashion of making a fetish of an unopened book had not a good deal to do with the condition of the Coptic Church. But it is the most hopeful of signs when a Church or a nation begins to recognize its own defects, and I could not but be moved when my little Coptic companion, sitting cross-legged at my feet while we were waiting for the arrival of the brides, and answering some questions about his faith and his people, said, as an apology for some confession which he was evidently reluctant to make, "But you know, sir, we are an inert Church." May his bright and inquisitive mind be a prophecy of the sacred curiosity erelong to awaken among his people—a curiosity which shall prompt them to read the volume which now so many of them only "ignorantly worship!"

Once more our conversation was interrupted by shouts and cries from the street, and as we turned to the windows we saw from the torches flaming, as well as from the crowd that attended them, that the brides were approaching. As we leaned out and watched them threading their way among the

curious and motley assemblage which surrounded them, we observed that each of them was attended—protected would be a better word—by a stalwart companion of the sterner sex, who led them along by the shoulders very much as one would guide a blind child. Indeed, it was evident from their stature that they were little more than children, and on inquiry I found that neither of them was over thirteen years of age. They had not been seen by the young men who were to be their husbands, and they were veiled or draped in such a way as to make it utterly impossible to infer anything whatever as to their appearance. We were wondering, as they approached the door below us, how they had survived the walk from their own homes to the scene of the wedding, swathed as they were by huge shawls, which covered their heads and faces, and were tightly wrapped around their shoulders. My companion ventured to suggest how easily one might be married to the wrong bride under such circumstances, especially when, as in this case, they were dressed, so far as could be seen, precisely alike. But in the midst of the discussion which this suggestion raised, we were interrupted suddenly by a prolonged and

piercing scream, as if a locomotive under a full head of steam was charging up the stairway, and with this premonitory signal the brides entered the room.

XI.

A Coptic Wedding.

A Marriage Ceremony Curiously Performed, and a Wedding Dinner Curiously Eaten.

My last chapter left two brides on the threshold of the apartment in which, a few minutes later, a double wedding was to be celebrated. But before the ceremony began, my vivacious companion, on the strength of his superior acquaintance with the customs of the East, undertook to give me an explanation of the piercing and unearthly yell with which the two brides had been received. From whom this had proceeded we had no means of seeing. The sound seemed to come from the

stairway, and was prolonged for a moment or two after the brides entered the room in which we were awaiting them. Its extreme shrillness made it probable that we had heard the voices of women, and this, he assured me, was the case; adding that this was the lamentation of the attendant virgins in view of the dismal fate of their companions. "Strange," he added, "that in a country and among a people taught to regard it as an unmixed disgrace *not* to be married, there should be this custom of howling and shrieking in order to express the grief occasioned by a step which every young woman is educated from her birth religiously to aspire to take." Unfortunately, this remark was robbed of its point by an interpreter, who informed us that the screams which we heard, so far from being an attempt to give expression to any sorrowful emotion, were cries of joy with which it was customary to hail a bride's arrival. One could not but agree with my companion, who insisted that if this was so, young women in Egypt had a very imperfect conception of a joyful sound.

When the brides entered the room they were guided to their places precisely as we had seen them when watching them on their

way through the street below. There was not the slightest sign of recognition between them and their respective bridegrooms, and from the beginning to the end there were no more signs of life in either of them than if they had been two mummies. Indeed, H. suggested that as they made no responses and never once showed their faces, there was no reason why the ceremony should not be gone through with in company with a sort of lay-figure, or with some one trained, like a professional diver, to do without breathing for a long time—a function which their swathed and muffled condition must have made it extremely difficult for mere novices to perform.

These speculations, however, were interrupted by the services, which, after a few moments, began. We had almost forgotten our invitation to assist in them, when we were recalled by the approach of two of the ecclesiastics, one bearing a censer and the other a metal box (I am ashamed to betray, by my use of these bald phrases, my ignorance of the proper terminology in these matters), from which we were in turn requested to take a pinch of incense and sprinkle it upon the burning coals already smoking in the censer. I hope I did not render myself liable to be

proceeded against canonically by my compliance with this request, which was made with such bland and Oriental persuasiveness that it was quite impossible to resist it. It was immediately followed by a ceremonious "censing" of the other priests, ourselves, the brides and bridegrooms, the deacons, choir-boys, etc., and then a fat and sleepy-looking old gentleman, the senior of the clergy present, went on in due course with the service.

It would be tedious to rehearse it here, were I competent to do so, which, as it was performed exclusively in either Coptic or Arabic, I confess I am not. What was chiefly noticeable about it, however, was the profound indifference with which everybody, including the persons about to be married and the clergy themselves, appeared to regard it. I have seen services that were painfully mechanical, but here the effect was somehow quite different. When people are using words of which they know perfectly well the meaning, but are using them with listlessness or indecorous rapidity and parrot-like monotony of repetition, there is something that shocks one very deeply. But here the impression was wholly of another sort. I shall never forget that stout old priest, with his vestments so huddled

upon him that he looked like an old woman crooning a ditty, of whose significance she had long since lost all intelligible apprehension, and who accepted a correction from his choir-leader as meekly as if he had been a school-boy. Indeed, it was one of the curiosities of the occasion that the priests were all of them so unfamiliar, apparently, with the service that they spelled through their various parts as if they had been beginners in the art of reading. Every now and then one of them would make a blunder, when the precentor would call out in a sharp, irritated tone, "La! la!" (no! no!) and give him the correct reading in a sort of grumbling under-key that was inexpressibly amusing; whereupon the old priest would look up over his spectacles in a meek and rather wounded fashion, as though mildly resenting this humiliating correction before strangers, and then once more address himself to his task, with painstaking deliberation, following the lines with his finger, and reading at a pace which threatened to prolong the services through the night. It only needed the abrupt rests to which each ecclesiastic treated himself in turn, to render the whole scene irresistibly comic. When our elderly and portly friend had finished his part he promptly

dropped, Turkish fashion, to the ground, and sat cross-legged on the floor, while some one else took up the service. On one such occasion he came into sudden and unexpected collision with a slender and feeble-looking clerical brother who had taken up the service, and who was reading it with his back to him. For a moment the brother reeled and rocked like a tower tottering to its fall, but at length succeeded in recovering his centre of gravity, though it was a good while before we recovered ours.

All this time the service was proceeding with as little reference to the candidates for matrimony as though they had not been present. There seemed something studied in the accuracy with which each officiating priest carefully turned his back upon them, and it was not until near the end of the service that either of the couples had any ecclesiastical notice whatever. I could not help thinking this a mistake, if the priests had any regard for their own feelings, for the two bridegrooms at least respected the obligations of decorum so far as to preserve a reverent silence, and looked occasionally as if they were somewhat interested in the service. Not so the other persons present, who whispered and chatted

to each other, in somewhat subdued tones, it is true, but otherwise without the slightest reserve. One of the priests evidently felt it his duty to make the occasion as cheerful as possible, and, therefore, while one of his brethren was occupied in reading some part of the service, he would be imparting some pleasant jest to his companion, and the low ripple of laughter would come in in the midst of the droning of the "officiant" like some light running accompaniment to a heavy bass solo. Of course a great deal of this, so surprising, and in some aspects of it so painful, to us, was to be explained by the fact that the service was conducted in the Coptic tongue, which a great many of the Copts themselves very imperfectly understand. Indeed, if these Coptic Christians ever reflected about the fact at all, it must have been a humiliating thought to them that, whenever they would make any part of their services intelligible to the mass of persons who attend them, they are obliged (as they were on this occasion) to use an interpreter, who translates the passages of the Gospels and Epistles read in the services into Arabic. On this occasion the interpreter was a youth with one eye, who ran this eye along the page in a curious fashion, and upon whom

the old priest, to whom I have referred as occasionally blundering in his Coptic, revenged himself by snubbing him audibly for his blunders in Arabic.

These things would not have been at once intelligible to us if it had not been for the constant assistance of our little friend, the English-speaking lad in the choir. This youthful Copt could not be induced to regard anything as of so much importance as the business of making things plain to us, and he kept up his running commentary in tones which he took very little trouble to make inaudible to the whole room. Leaning down once (for he sat cross-legged on the floor through most of the service) to hint to him the propriety of a more subdued key, I reached out my hand incautiously behind me to preserve my balance, and in doing so knocked my hat out of the window. It was of the most rigidly orthodox English pattern, and I knew it would be of no earthly use to any native of Cairo, unless (as Sir Arthur Helps has somewhere suggested a savage easily might) he should mistake it for a cooking utensil, and convert it to some such use; but it was the only hat I had, and I was naturally anxious to recover it. I ventured, therefore, to whisper my dilemma to my young companion, in the

hope that he could commission some one in the room to go downstairs and search for it; but what was my dismay to see him drop his service-book on the floor, doff his vestments with most astonishing celerity, and vanish out of the door in search of it himself! It spoke well for the honesty of the somewhat promiscuous crowd below that in a few moments he returned with it safe and sound.

As the service drew to its close it was varied for the first time by some words addressed to the two couples, and by certain ceremonies symbolical of the union then about to be consummated. One of these was extremely pretty and suggestive. An embroidered scarf of some rich texture was handed to the officiating clergyman, and this he bound round the head of the bridegroom, and then, passing it directly from the crown of his head, repeated the process of winding it about the head of the bride. The effect was not ungraceful, and the idea which the whole was evidently intended to convey, of the two lives thenceforth united in one thought and interest, was very beautifully expressed. After this came the ceremony of *tekreel*, or crowning, which consisted in the placing by the priest of a kind of crown

or frontal diadem of gold on the head of each person, which was worn until the conclusion of the ceremony. The priest also received and blessed two rings in each case, for the bridegroom and bride, and then, after what appeared to be an exhortation addressed to the couples, the services were brought to a close. We were not allowed, however, to congratulate the brides, and the bridegrooms seemed a little puzzled by our western forms of speech in offering our salutations. Meantime the brides had been led away by their attendants, and in a few moments the two bridegrooms descended to attend to the entertainment of their guests.

By this time the evening was well advanced, and we were about to hasten away in search of something to take the place of our lost dinner. Our interpreter, however, insisted that we should remain and dine with the friends of the bridegroom; and after some consultation we decided to accept his invitation. It needed all our acquaintance with Oriental traditions of hospitality, however, to enable us to overcome the instinctive reluctance to intrude upon persons on whom we had not the slightest claim, and whose company we had sought purely from motives

of curiosity. But we were assured that our host would feel wounded if we retired without tasting of his viands, and our guide and counsellor, Hassan, assured us that we should find them abundantly worth tasting.

As usual, Hassan was right. We descended from the upper rooms and found ourselves in a large and unpaved court, around three sides of which ran a broad divan, on which guests were reclining in all sorts of costumes and postures. We were seated among these, and enjoyed for a few moments a very wholesome and humbling sense of the hideousness of our garments when compared with the rich and happily-blended colors of the costumes which surrounded us, and the easy and indolent grace of the persons who wore them. But these sleepy-looking and smiling Cairene gentlemen successfully concealed any scorn they may have felt for our mean apparel and *gauche* bearing, and made room for us beside them with hearty cordiality. As for a time our dragoman, interpreter, and the choir-boys all alike disappeared, we were left in a somewhat perplexing position, for conversation was impossible, and the perpetual salaaming with which the guests about us supplied the place of it grew somewhat stale with repeti-

tion. We were regaled once more with coffee, and also with sherbet, and then our interpreter entered and announced that dinner was served.

As it was served in a room about twelve feet square instead of a large dining-hall, it appeared that the guests were to be "dined" in instalments, and these, if our own experience was a criterion, did not exceed in number ten persons. Seven sat down, with an interpreter and ourselves, to a table consisting of a shallow circular metal tray about four feet in diameter, in the centre of which stood a single covered dish, and around the circumference of which were distributed ten large oval-shaped pieces of bread. Two spoons, laid beside each of these, completed the equipment of the table. We seated ourselves with a good deal of salaaming and ceremony, and then each man seized a spoon and waited for the feast to begin. In an instant the lid of the mysterious dish was whipped off, and in another instant nine ivory spoons were fishing in the soup which was disclosed, and transferring both liquid and solid nourishment to hungry mouths with somewhat startling rapidity. I say nine spoons, and not ten, for at first I found my-

self altogether unequal to the emergency; but, "Help yourself, sir, else you get nothing at all," cried the interpreter, and obviously this was precisely "the situation." So in went one more spoon among the rest, and with the first plunge vanished every vestige of reserve. In a few moments I found myself rending a roast turkey with my fingers, and fishing out tidbits with a fine scorn of knives, forks, and spoons. It required a little more effort, when a very affable, but not very tidy-looking, gentleman on my left insisted on transferring little splinters of meat from the dish to my plate (or piece of bread) with his fingers, to eat them with much relish; but even this reluctance vanished in time, and before the repast was over I became a good deal shaken in my conviction that a four-pronged fork is the most distinctive mark of an advanced civilization.

I shall not linger upon our courses. They meandered through labyrinths of culinary mystery, which wisdom counselled us not to penetrate too deeply. There was a dish that tasted like terrapin, but then it might so easily have been rats that we promptly recalled the apostolic rule, and ate, asking no questions. As I have said, Hassan was right. So

good a dinner one does not often eat, and if Egypt has lost some nobler arts, she has wisely preserved the art of cooking. Is it this that explains what one may see in so much Egyptian statuary, and equally in so many living Egyptian faces? Was it because they were so wisely and wholesomely nourished that the disinterred images of those heroes of the time of Rameses II. look down so blandly and benignly upon the dyspeptic traveller of to-day? One thing we were assured of, as we exchanged these queries on our way home, and that was, as our interpreter impressed upon us, that the two brides whom we had seen married, whatever else they might be ignorant of, were pretty sure to be thorough mistresses of culinary art. "They might have brought more costly dowries to their husbands," murmured my friend, in the somewhat acrimonious tone of a man who has suffered from sour bread, "but surely none more likely to illumine the domestic hearthstone with perpetual sunshine." Such earthy creatures are men!

XII.

Education in Egypt.

American and English Efforts to Teach Mohammedan Children—Curious Difficulties in the Way—Miss Whately's School.

It would be a very pitiful thing if one went to the East merely to be diverted by it, and still more pitiful if the traveller could look upon that imperfect and sadly-obscured light which shines through the rites of the Coptic or the Mohammedan faith, without a hearty sympathy for any endeavor to make that light clearer and fuller. One cannot forget, of course, that it has been somewhat the fashion to smile upon all such endeavors with a bland and compassionate contempt. Many persons maintain that Christianity never has made, and never can make, the slightest impression upon Mohammedanism; and many others believe with equal sincerity that Coptic Chris-

tianity is of so poor and low a type that any attempt to improve it is simply wasting strength in the vain endeavor to galvanize a corpse. Certainly one has no right to quarrel with persons whose faith in the quickening, ennobling, and conquering power of the religion of the New Testament is of so very mild and tepid a quality. But it is at least a matter for unfeigned rejoicing, that there are a few men and women whose opinions are very different, and who have proved their faith by noble and self-denying work in Egypt, extending over a period of more than twenty years.

It is matter of honest pride, too, that some of these are our own country-people, who have, at Alexandria, at Cairo, and at Siout, in middle Egypt, maintained schools and missions with considerable success. Dr. Lansing, the head of the American mission in Cairo, and his coadjutor, Dr. Watson, together with the warm-hearted and hard-working men and women who are associated with them, are members, I believe, of a communion which inherits its ecclesiastical traditions largely from the rigid formularies of Scotch Presbyterianism; and any testimony as to their work from a prelatist might possibly awaken in them a shiver of self-reproach at the too easy com-

plaisance which had earned it. In truth, I am not competent to speak of their ecclesiastical labors, for I know little or nothing of them. What I did see in Cairo was their school, in which were gathered a large number of pupils of both sexes, and of both the Mohammedan and Coptic faiths. These pupils were receiving a higher order of education than they could hope to obtain elsewhere, and were gaining, by means of it, a mental inquisitiveness which must, sooner or later, prove fatal to a great deal of Oriental superstition, whether it disguise itself under Coptic or Mohammedan forms. As I have intimated in a former chapter, the Egyptian government has not been altogether backward in encouraging its people to read and write; but what is wanted is something more than this merely elementary teaching—instruction in history, in the exact sciences, and, above all, in a habit of diligent thinking. It will only be when this has been in some measure achieved that the evils of persistent and stupid traditions will be overcome, and that men will come to understand that the only Evil Eye is one that sees things falsely. When people believe that the refuse of a black dog is a sovereign remedy for one disease, and the refuse of a white cow for an-

other, there is nothing we can do for them but to awaken in them that which thinks and reasons, and so set them to find out for themselves the hollowness of their delusions.

Undoubtedly this is a slow process, and one which will often receive its severest checks from the obstinacy of the people among whom it is attempted; but it is no less certain that our American schools in Egypt have been making steady and healthful advancement, and that already they can point to large numbers of men and women whose lives have been made purer and happier, and whose aspirations have been dignified and elevated by the teaching which they have received. It was my fortune to be in Cairo when the new doorstep (or corner-stone) of the new American school-building was laid, and to witness a scene which has, I presume, already been described by other persons who were present. To one of them, at any rate, the most interesting feature of that unique and picturesque spectacle was not the assemblage of distinguished Americans—though it included judges, diplomatists, and men of letters—not the array, at once brilliant and gratifying, of the representatives of foreign governments and interests, nor yet the imposing deputation of

Bishops and clergy from the Greek Church, who "assisted" on the occasion with such benign and affable dignity, but the dusky fringe of eager faces, crowned with turban or *tarboosh*, that hung upon the edge of the little group of Franks, at once outnumbering them beyond all count, and eclipsing their more languid interest by a hungry earnestness of attention which could not be wearied. One's scepticism needed to be of the most obstinate texture in order to persuade him that in such a scene there was no evidence of the awakening of dormant minds, and of loftier and more truthful perceptions.

I have said little of the American schools in detail, because my opportunities for seeing them were slight, and because (unless I mistake) an extended account of them has recently appeared in our own newspapers, in connection with a description of the ceremony to which I have already referred. Another school in Cairo is doing a work which is of peculiar interest, and this I was enabled to visit repeatedly. I refer to the school under the charge of the daughter of the Archbishop of Dublin, Miss Whately, which has had a career of signal success. One ever so indifferent to the matter of the

education of Egyptian children would have felt some curiosity to see the daughter of a man whose name is so well known in our own land, and whose works have a place in the memory, if not in the gratitude, of every school-boy of this generation. I remember, as though it were yesterday, assisting, when a lad of a dozen years of age, in the unpacking of a case of books sent from Ireland to Pennsylvania by Archbishop Whately, as an acknowledgment of the contributions made by citizens of Philadelphia for the relief of the famine of 1848 (I am not quite sure as to the year) in Ireland. Along with them the Archbishop sent to a brother ecclesiastic a full-length engraving of himself, and, school-boy as I was, plodding at the time through the pages of his Grace's "Logic" and "Rhetoric," I can recall the curious interest with which I studied his portrait. It was with something of the sense of greeting a familiar face that I met, for the first time, under her own roof in Cairo, the daughter who bears his name, and it was, too, with the feeling that there must have been some slumbering strain of enthusiastic self-sacrifice in that somewhat dry and unsentimental nature of his, which, coming to the surface in the

kindlier soil of a woman's heart, had prompted his child to go forth to the work in the midst of which I found her. One cannot doubt that it is owing not a little to that sound judgment and sturdy wisdom which she has inherited from her distinguished father that the success of Miss Whately is owing. That it is success no one who visits her school can doubt.

When I saw them there were nearly two hundred young persons assembled in the various class rooms, and their whole bearing, as well as their prompt and intelligent answers to the questions which were put to them, showed a mental alertness which was positively refreshing. The school is graded according to the ages and attainments of the pupils, and it was not the least interesting and curious among the scenes in the various class rooms to have pointed out to us young girls whose hands had been repeatedly sought in marriage, but who had declined such overtures rather than surrender the privileges of the school. One of these young women, who had reached the advanced age of fifteen, had been asked in marriage no less than five times, and five times had declined. Let it be remembered that an Egyptian girl has

arrived at a marriageable age when she is twelve or thirteen years old, and that this young girl was not only departing from the customs of her people, but declining what every tradition of her race conspired to teach her was the crowning dignity of her sex. I confess I found myself wondering whether one could hope to find a similar thirst for learning among more favored peoples.

Indeed, it is in this courage in resisting temptations to surrender opportunities for learning, and in overcoming obstacles to the improvement of those opportunities, that one finds a most hopeful sign for the future of the Egyptian people. Those obstacles begin with their birth, and multiply with every added year. In the case of an Egyptian child, one of the fundamental conditions of its well-being, in the mind of its parent, is that it should be dirty and ill-clad. I have already described how neglected and poorly clothed will often appear the child of parents of comparative wealth. This is permitted out of deference to the widely-prevalent and most potent superstition of the Evil Eye. If you have a good horse, take care not to clean him or to caparison him gayly, or you will provoke the misfortune of the Evil Eye.

Let his coat be rough and his trappings mean, and then he will pass unnoticed, or, at least, provoke no man's envious or covetous glance ; for the envious or covetous glance is the Evil Eye, and it is an illustration of the odd moral inversions of these Arabic superstitions that the punishment provoked by the Evil Eye falls, not on the envious or covetous person who has indulged in these sinful glances, but upon the innocent victim on whom they fall. If your horse is stolen or runs away, then it is because some one has cast upon him an Evil Eye. If your child droops and sickens, it is because his beauty, or his apparel, or both, have provoked the glances of the Evil Eye. Plainly, therefore, the way to avoid these calamities is to conceal the treasures which you possess. If your child has beauty of feature, take care that he shall be so begrimed with dirt that no one can tell him from a mud wall. If he have grace of person or bearing, clothe him in rags, and starve him by neglect, so that no one may notice him save to avoid him. An excellent system, on the Egyptian theory of life, but quite fatal to his chances of getting a good education in a Christian school; for whatever an Egyptian parent may venture

to do in the case of his or her own children, the least that any Christian man or woman can demand, when gathering a hundred or two of such children into one school, is that they shall have clean skins, and, at any rate, one decent garment. Not to insist upon this would be to make the school a hot-house for the rapid development of bad habits and of contagious disease. But here there straightway arises collision between the parent and teacher. "What!" demands the former, "shall I make my child a target for the malign influences of every Evil Eye that may chance to fall upon him? Make him clean and dress him neatly, do you say? But what is this if not a short method of dooming him to speedy misfortune?" And when one attempts to reason with such an objection, he very speedily finds how much harder it is to conquer a superstition than to persuade intelligence.

But these are merely the difficulties that lie at the threshold. When an Egyptian child has been coaxed into school, every tradition of his race, and every motive of parental selfishness, conspire to get him out of it as soon as possible. If the child be a boy, the merest rudiments of learning, in a country where edu-

cation is not the heritage of the many, but the distinction of the few, give him a commercial value which the indolence of his natural guardians is not slow to turn into money. It is easy to see that, under these circumstances, it becomes every month—almost every week—increasingly difficult to retain a hold upon children who have been laboriously gathered. The teacher may have gone, as Miss Whately was accustomed to go, from door to door, soliciting the privilege of teaching Arab children for nothing. She may have wrestled in argument, as Miss Whately amusingly pictures herself doing, with old women who did not feel interested enough in their visitor to open their doors to her, but who could hurl from a second-story window a string of shrill and acrimonious reasons why children should not be taught anything; such a one may have slowly triumphed over the prejudices, the obstinacy, the ignorance of stupid and wrong-headed teachers, and may have succeeded at length in winning children to her side. It is then that her sorest discouragements begin; for no sooner has she awakened some dormant spark of interest, and laid the baldest foundation of some worthy superstructure of education, than a thousand motives conspire to prohibit her

further advances. If the child is a girl, any education is regarded as, at the best, but a doubtful boon, and it is easy to see that under institutions which lend their sanction to polygamy, there is a certain force in such a view. To educate women is, undoubtedly, to incur the risk of making them dissatisfied with a condition which ignorance alone can render endurable; for while learning may improve the sex as companions, it is apt to impair their value as toys—and it is as toys that Mohammedanism rates them—and it equally resents an interference which teaches them to read and to think, and an education which encourages them to believe that they have souls.

If, in spite of such difficulties and others like them, a single woman has built up a school which is educating both boys and girls in sound learning and in Christian ideas, her work is surely worthy of all honor. That that work has been done without parade, and in the cheerful and resolute fashion which is so distinctive of English work and of the English character, is not its least charm. Two things which I saw in Miss Whately's school will live in my memory as freshly and vividly as anything which I have seen in all the East. One of them was revealed to me when, throw-

ing open a door, Miss Whately said simply, "This is our sewing-school." In a lofty room were assembled a number of young girls and young children, engaged in groups of twos and threes, in embroidery upon tambour-frames. Every variety of work, in every variety of texture, was here going on, including the embroidery of silk and velvet in colors, and of other light and airy-looking materials, which I shall not attempt to designate more precisely, in gold and silver thread. When I remembered that it is a rare thing to find an Oriental woman who understands even the simplest rudiments of sewing, it was a matter of genuine rejoicing that such a resource for employing idle hours and beautifying homes was placed within the reach of those girls, who would otherwise have sat with folded hands, or used them only in the coarsest drudgery. Somebody has said that what smoking is to men, needlework in its various forms is to women—a soothing employment, that quiets restless nerves and furnishes an outlet for aimless activities. At any rate, such home arts cannot be taught to these Mohammedan girls without introducing among them habits of self-helpfulness, and awakening equally an impulse to make home brighter, gayer, and

more home-like, whose good effects cannot easily be calculated.

The other scene was in a larger room, where at least a hundred younger children were gathered, and where two of their number, standing in the middle of the room, led the rest in repeating the Lord's Prayer. Anything so profoundly pathetic by virtue of its very naturalness and simplicity, it is not easy to conceive. Two little girls, of modest and devout mien, advanced from their companions, and standing with heads reverently bent, and one hand covering the else possibly wandering eyes, repeated in Arabic in low, clear tones, the simple words, "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name." In the same hushed voice the whole school repeated the words after them. I do not know what it was—the tones of their voices, the earnestness of their faces, the unaffected reverence of their whole bearing—but before they had done, the tears stood in my eyes, and that incomparable prayer had got somehow a new meaning and a deeper appropriateness. "Thy kingdom come." Who could doubt that in God's own time and way it would verily come to these, as to so many others still walking in darkness or in paths clouded by superstition? And seeing

the love for her that shone in those childlike faces, who could help at once honoring and envying the noble woman who, turning her back upon the refinements, the dignities, and the companionships of home, was doing, in that far-off land, so noble and Christ-like a work?

XIII.

The Nile and the Pyramids.

The Conditions of a Pleasant Nile Voyage—First Views of Pyramids and Ruins.

There are legends of Winters passed upon the Nile which record as little of peace and repose as we are wont to attribute to the Kilkenny cats. I remember one of them which told how two young couples, setting out in company for a three-months' voyage, quarrelled hopelessly at their first dinner, and never sat down to the same table for the remainder of the seventy days. A cynic

whom I met in Cairo advised me to take a railway time-table with me, so that I might be able to abandon boat life and return to civilization so soon as the monotony of limited companionship became intolerable. Neither legend nor counsel was altogether inopportune. Congenial society is, undoubtedly, desirable where one is shut up to constant intercourse with half a dozen people for a whole Winter, and the gift—for it is scarcely a thing to be acquired—of being a good traveller is as desirable on the Nile as anywhere else.

Thus conditioned, however, Nile life can scarcely be too much praised even by its most enthusiastic votaries. Friends in whose judgment I had been wont to confide pitied me beforehand in view of its inevitable dulness, or mildly rebuked me for desiring to enjoy its equally inevitable indolence. It is difficult to understand how there is any room for or risk of either. It is undoubtedly true, as a most observant traveller has written, that "no one can see anything in Egypt except what he takes with him the power of seeing;" but the lowest order of intellect takes with it some power of seeing, and one is not twenty miles from Cairo before the eye

has been challenged with sights at once so strange and so stimulating that one's thoughts by day and one's dreams by night become saturated with the warm coloring of Egyptian sunshine and Egyptian antiquities. One of the first excursions which is made on shore, if one takes the excursions on the way up the river (which, however, is not, perhaps, the best plan), is to Sakkara, by way of Memphis. This is made not so much to view the meagre remains of what was, when Herodotus saw it, the largest and most magnificent city in Egypt, but to see the Pyramids which are just beyond it, and which probably include the oldest in the world.

Let us suppose now that you never saw a pyramid. You may have reserved those at Gheezeh for the last, and if, in your reading, you have ever stumbled upon any speculations as to the original design and motive of the Pyramids, you may possibly have turned from it as an extremely mouldy and uninteresting topic; but as your donkey, making his last turn, clears the shadowing palms, and brings you out upon the desert, you are confronted with something concerning which, as it rises there before your eyes,

it is just as impossible not to be curious as it is not to breathe. That huge and towering mass of stone, whose very simplicity of outline and utter absence of ornament lends to it a majestic grandeur and dignity which are all its own—who reared it there? What does it mean? How was it builded? What did it hide? And whether or not you have an answer ready for these questions, this at least you know, that those mighty monuments have not been reared in vain. If they were meant to perpetuate the memory of a great people, verily they have done it. The race which could plan such structures and then rear them—the kings who could make their tombs so stable that already they have outlasted fifty centuries, and look down to-day upon the ruins of mightiest empires mingling their dust at their feet—such kings, wicked, cruel, remorseless though they may have been, were men and not children, rulers and not puppets. And yet all this is not the mere superlative of a heated imagination; it is the simple truth. If we can be certified of any fact on earth, then we may be sure of this—that it is more than five thousand years since the supervising architect of the Great Pyramid of Gheezeh walked into the throne-

room of Cheops and said, "Sire, your tomb is finished." You remember that the Pyramids of Sakkara are even older than this, and while you are trying to grasp this fact, your guide beckons you down into one of the splendid tombs which lie at the foot of these Pyramids, and you find yourself surrounded by a wealth of color and a profusion of adornment which scores of centuries have not been able to dim or efface. "Who were the people that did these things?" you ask yourself, and at once piqued and stimulated by your own ignorance of them, you ride slowly back to your *dahabeeh* again, busy with a hundred questions to which a month before you never conceived it possible you could take the trouble to seek for an answer.

Thus you find the use of a certain part of your equipment, which you have hitherto been tempted to designate as superfluous luggage. You were told to bring Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," and Lane's "Modern Egyptians," and Piozzi Smyth on the Pyramids, and Sir John Mandeville's Travels, and a number of other heavy-looking volumes, which you bought as a tribute to decorum, and encumbered yourself with as furniture which was to perform a purely ornamental function; but

suddenly you find that the mustiest of these volumes has become interesting if it can tell you anything about that elder Egypt, and that even the Bible has an altogether profane attraction as a record of the doings of the Pharaohs; for the Pharaohs, you find, included Cheops and Horus and Sethos, who was that particular Pharaoh who once so affably patronized Joseph, and who found his account in the shrewd Israelite's characteristic utilization of a "short" wheat market. "What kind of men," you find yourself asking, "were these who reared such monuments and builded themselves such mighty tombs?" And though you may call, and rightly enough, building monuments to one's self, and piling stones upon each other for months and years together, simply to make a burial-place for one's carcass, a very narrow and selfish idea of immortality, yet the almost sublime grandeur of these tombs will not let you look upon them unmoved.

It is in this way that one's ignorance and one's curiosity conspire to drive him to study books, stones, hieroglyphics, anything that will tell him about this wonderful Egyptian past; for it is quite impossible to learn anything of them in any second-hand way. In

younger countries, and amid later antiquities, as in England and on the Continent, you will find that dreary being who, whether he calls himself a sexton or a cicerone, a *valet de place* or a guide, is the one human being who, of all others, makes travel the most utter weariness, and the study of the past the most dismal mockery. Who shall tell what moments of rapt delight in some grand old cathedral, as at Ely or Cologne, have been spoiled, nay, made a scourge to one's patience, and a blister to his temper, by the whining, droning, mercenary creature who insists upon "showing" you the building! There is no such plague in Egypt, land of the plagues though it is. At the foot of the Pyramids, and amid the ruins of Karnak, you will be equally untroubled by a cicerone. True, there are barefooted Arabs who call themselves guides; but they usually know about half a dozen proper names, and make up for the rest with expressive but somewhat limited pantomime. And so you are turned back upon yourself and your books. You may appeal to your dragoman, but your dragoman, though he has been travelling up and down the Nile and piloting the stranger among its ruins for half a lifetime, has only

learned enough to smile when you ask him a question, and say, "That must be the tomb of Rameses—no?" a form of response that intimates his supreme anxiety to please you by calling it anything that you may prefer—which, according to his understanding, is the one function of a dragoman.

In a word, you are in a land where you must be your own guide. You cannot go on, day after day, traversing the ruins of the most magnificent cities and temples that the sun has shone upon, without knowing something, however little, about them. You see tombs, obelisks, palace walls, covered with the most expressive as well as the most venerable writing which human wit has ever invented. You cannot consent to be such a dolt as to continue staring at them, day after day, without the faintest glimmering of what may be the meaning of at least one single cartouch.

Here one finds his occupation for the days of his *dahabeeh* life, which, while it does not deserve the dignity of the name of study, has at least the charm of diversion. Then, too, on days when there are no excursions—no pyramids to visit, nor temples to explore, nor tombs to descend into—there is the Nile itself, with its endless stream of life and its

ever-changeful banks. As I write these lines, the wind has suddenly changed, and my cabin windows look down on a broad river, up which there comes charging a fleet of at least a hundred sail. They are merely the shabby cargo boats of the natives, on which often one sees only a single head, doubtless somehow attached by arm or leg to the helm, but hidden out of sight as the little hulk scuds by, and yet, as they advance with their huge lateen-sails crossing each other like the tapering wings of a bird, they form a picture, framed by the ragged edges of the Mokotam hills, and fringed with a broadening belt of palms, which makes one wonder why Egypt is not the ideal home of the painter.

Then, too there is the perpetual variety of the very water's edge. When away from Egypt you read how every living thing in the land must come to the brink of the Nile to drink, and you think of the assertion as the exaggeration of the traveller, or else—which is much more probable—you do not think of it at all; but here you see the thing itself, day by day, and all day long, repeated before your eyes. The solitary buffalo cow, the flocks of sheep, the ibis, or the beautiful bird which stands as its modern representative,

the troops of girls with their water-jars upon their heads—all these go to form a combination with varieties as endless as a kaleidoscope, and with colors at once infinitely warmer and more varied. It is undoubtedly possible to be dull on the Nile, but then, it must be when one has bandaged his eyes and stopped his ears. To any body whose senses are not hopelessly asleep, it is at once a perpetual entertainment and an ever-fresh surprise.

Undoubtedly it has its drawbacks. You have no daily despatches, and you cannot follow the fluctuations of the stock market; but it consoles you to reflect that you are sailing up a river whose people managed to rear an empire without these things, and whose shattered and fallen monuments to-day, though scores of centuries have spoiled and hacked and disfigured them, make the loftiest and grandest structures of modern times seem poor and tame and contemptible.

XIV.

Our Gifts to Egypt.

The Smoke of a Factory and its Suggestions —Machinery, Taxation, Rum, and Ruin Imported from Christian Lands—England's Opportunity.

About one hundred and seventy-five miles above Cairo, on the Nile, is one of the huge sugar factories of the Khedive. The Khedive, I believe, owns every such establishment in Egypt, and each one of them breaks upon the vision of the traveller as he ascends the river with a fresh sense of incongruity. One recognizes it afar off by its smoke, and smoke is a phenomenon in Egypt. In a country where there is almost no wood, no need of artificial heat for one's comfort, and no consumption of fuel save for cooking, it must be so; for very little cooking is done,

and if the pot is made to boil at all, it is usually by the combustion of corn-stalks.

When, therefore, one sees the horizon streaked not with sunshine but with smut, it is with a feeling that the sanctity of the landscape has been somehow violated. This feeling does not diminish when one discovers that the smoke comes belching forth from a hideous upstart smoke-stack, which thrusts its ugly bulk straight up into the air for some scores of feet, while clustering at its feet are the bald and common-place buildings which comprise the rest of the "works."

This civilized impertinence, disfiguring the bank of the Nile, and obstructing the view of the desert, suggested, nevertheless, several questions, which could only be answered by visiting it. I found it quite open to inspection, and before I had left it discovered some one who was both able and willing to answer questions about the enterprise, if I had been disposed to ask them; but by that time, my questions had been answered through my eyes. Here was a collection of somewhat intricate and costly machinery, ordinarily entrusted among us to the care of skilled workmen, and demanding constant watchfulness and considerable intelligence in its use. It

required but a glance at the buildings to see that they had been reared by other than an Egyptian architect, and equally at the machinery within them to see that it, too, was of foreign contrivance and construction. Indeed, the apparatus I found was French, and the mind that superintended it was that of a Frenchman. Until lately, however, the superintendent of the works has been an Englishman. But the men and boys, the skilled and unskilled "hands" alike, were Arabs, who seemed to be abundantly equal to their work, and who managed the machinery with quickness and precision. The religion of Egypt precludes the employment of some of the processes which obtain in sugar works elsewhere, and refining—at any rate in the works at Rhoda—is not carried to so high a point as with us. But so far as it went the work was apparently well done, and with every regard to economy and thoroughness.

The one thing about the whole that was most impressive was the curious change which seemed to have been wrought by this contact with the mechanical ingenuity of the West in the temperament and bearing of the Arab. The modern native of Egypt is one of the most cheerful people in the world. Especially

is this true of children, who greet one with a smile as instinctively as if it was their only language. This is an experience which meets one with a perpetual sense of surprise, and steel your heart as you may against the everlasting cry for *backsheesh*, you yield again and again to the witchery of a smile which is at once so beseeching and so sunny that it would melt the resolution of a stoic. No matter where you are—wandering along the river's bank, or careering through the narrow streets of some dilapidated town on a donkey—you cannot come upon a child so suddenly that it will not smile at you. And when one gets far enough south to approach the borders of Nubia, the natives will swarm about the traveller with a simple confidence, dashed usually with a certain laughing playfulness, which is singularly engaging.

In the sugar factory at Rhoda all the mirthfulness was somehow extinguished. There was plenty of "sweetness," but very little "light"—at least in the faces of the men and boys whose business it was to keep the sweetness simmering. We met scores of men and hundreds of boys, but I never caught a smile upon the face of any one of them. I do not know that their work was

harder than is usual with persons engaged in such industries, and there was no evidence of cruelty or hardship in the manner in which the daily task was enacted. Both men and boys received, I understood, regular wages, and though they were small enough, according to our ideas of the value of labor, they undoubtedly represented more money than the persons who drew them had ever handled before.

The dull and listless air which we remarked was occasioned, as I could not but fancy, by a loss which wages were powerless to repair. It was the loss of freedom and of the old nomadic life. The modern Egyptian calls the wandering Arab a Bedouee, but there is a spice of the nomad in every Arab, howsoever he may live. One sees it in the deserted villages, and sees the ulterior reason for it in the ever-changing banks of the Nile, which from time to time compel the abandonment of the villages, and make a wandering life a sort of necessity to the sustaining of any life at all. But along with this roving life there goes a strong taste for being in the "open." The Arab loves the sunshine and the canopy of the blue sky, and provided he can have these he is happier than he would

be if he were in a palace. Indeed, this passion is carried so far as to upset all our western theories of hygiene. An Arab loves to lie at full length in the sun; but if he cannot do that, he will put his head where the sun can, at any rate, beat unobstructedly upon it. Instead of keeping his head cool and his feet warm, he goes barefooted in all weathers, and, as I saw in riding through the streets of Siout, will hang with his bare head out of the doorway in the blazing sun, while his bare feet are stretched on the damp stones in the shade, and be intensely happy in the experience.

The men and boys who work in the Khedive's sugar factories get but little liberty and less sunshine, and hence (is it an inevitable consequence?), while they are not bright and cheery, like the lowliest of the *felaheen* in the fields, they are too often vicious and sadly intemperate. As we strolled through the environs of these factories of the Khedive, one of the party remarked how much they wore the air of similar neighborhoods at home. It did not occur to us to observe why this was so until some one had counted five "corner groceries" in which the means of drunkenness were cheaply obtained. At another

town on the river some of us had witnessed a scene which presented Mohammedanism in its best light. The governor had come on board a traveller's *dahabeeh* to pay his respects to the Howadji, and according to the somewhat doubtful usage of such occasions, was offered wine, which, being a Copt and not a Moslem, he drank without hesitation. In attendance upon him was a youth who stood just within the doorway during the interview. At a sign from the host wine was offered to him also, and it would have cheered Mr. Gough's heart to see the look and hear the cry of shocked and almost indignant recoil with which he refused it. Alas, that his countrymen have so many of them forgotten the lesson that their prophet taught them! The Greek merchants who swarm on the Nile have blistered its banks with spirit shops, and *arakee* and *maraschino* are the favorite beverages of the men who live in the larger towns or are employed in the public works.

So we found ourselves wondering, Do rum and machinery inevitably go together? As we strolled out of the sugar-works we found ourselves in the neighborhood of a deserted Summer palace of the Khedives, and were

invited to visit the adjacent gardens. The roses were in bloom, and the oranges hung in rich clusters upon the trees; but the blossoms were nipped by the raw norther that had been blowing for a week, and the blackened leaves of the shoots and buds showed that those northerly breezes had brought a blighting frost along with them. It was a dismal type of what the man of the North and the West, with his cold and grasping ways, has done for sunny but down-trodden Egypt. We have given her machinery to enrich her rulers and to pinch and impoverish her people. For all the feet that have traversed her shores, and for all the commercial enterprise that has explored her wonderful river, she is to-day no better, but rather worse. Since the steam-boats began ascending the Nile, the crocodile has largely disappeared from its banks; but other creatures, with as capacious a maw and as cruel a purpose, have taken his place. And to-day, though a great nation has undertaken to resuscitate her finances, it would seem to be purely in the interest of foreign bond-holders. "Is there anything in Egypt," wrote out an English inquirer to a resident in Cairo, "is there anything in Egypt which will bear a

tax that is not already taxed?" The answer was so coarse that I may not repeat it here; but when, in order to satisfy royal extravagance at home and bond-holding creditors abroad, every infant is taxed to an amount equal to one third of a soldier's wages for a month the instant that infant is born, and when, to discourage the crime of infanticide, which such a system of taxation inevitably provoked, every infant that dies, no matter how soon after its birth, is taxed through its parents to an amount equal to half a month's wages of an ordinary soldier, the dreadful and desperate wickedness of the situation may be appreciated. Of course, the evil is only driven a little further back, and crimes which are nameless prevail to an extent which it is appalling to contemplate.

All this seems far enough off from the sugar factory of Rhoda. But in truth the two lie close together. The Christian nations of the North and the West must furnish Egypt, if they would save it from something more utter and remediless than financial ruin, with other capital than machinery or military training or money. Its prince and its pashas want a wholesome substratum of sound moral ideas. And until these are imported, all

other importations are only hastening the day of a very bitter reckoning. England's opportunity is a very grand one! Heaven send that she may have the wisdom and the magnanimity to improve it!

Some Winter Days in Palestine.

I.

The Gate of Syria.

Port-Säid and its People—A Mixture of Races and Religions—Under the Flag of Russia—A Landing at Joppa.

Winter it certainly was not, as we passed up the moonlit streets of Port-Säid in search of a resting-place in which to spend our last Sunday in Egypt. The air was as soft and as still as June, and the hushed plashing of the fountain in the neighboring square broke the stillness of the midnight hour amid flowers blooming as in mid-Summer. Even three months of such experiences had not

familiarized us to their incongruity with all the associations of our American almanac, and we went to our beds with a sigh, as we thought how soon the harshness of a Syrian February would obliterate these sunny memories.

The next day was Sunday, but the only outward and visible signs of it were an unwonted display of consular bunting, and the discordant banging of the band in the neighboring square. We inquired of a voluble personage, who announced himself as "Guide and Dragoman for Port-Säid, reverend sir," if there was any Church of England service; but he had never heard of any, and could only offer us such scanty consolation as was to be found in the fact that, to use his own language, he had until recently "officiated himself in connection with the English chaplain at Alexandria." We found that his "officiating" consisted in having been verger for a short time at the English church, and that his only Orders were the orders from the chaplain to collect the pew-rents. Still, there seemed something eminently decorous and suitable in being shown about Port-Säid by an ex-sexton, and there was a certain unctuous formality in the way in which he called

our attention to the more disreputable features of that very disreputable town, which somehow threw a veil of semi-ecclesiastical propriety over its dirtiest aspects.

For some of its aspects were hopelessly dirty, and equally without the air of Orientalism, which elsewhere in Egypt almost reconciles one to dirt and—worse. Port-Säid is offensively new, and it has not the advantage of being in any real sense an Eastern town. Created by the Suez Canal, it is simply a huge bar-room, where the ships of all nations stop and buy that particular form of ardent spirits which can be the most easily adulterated, and accomplish the most pernicious effects. Greeks, Italians, Russians, Arabs, Jews, Englishmen, Egyptians, and Frenchmen, jostle each other in its streets, and a worse-looking set of representatives these various races and nations could hardly have. We read service in our room in the hotel on Sunday morning, looked in for a few moments at the rather tawdy but almost affectingly devout service in the Greek church in the afternoon (where a Nubian slave-girl, with a white child in her arms, recalled the days when Cyril ruled in Alexandria, and when all Northern Africa was as unanimously Chris-

tian as to-day it unanimously is not), and the next day shook the last grain of Egyptian dust from our feet, and took ship for Joppa, without a lingering sentiment of regret.

Our ship was Russian, with a crew whose boots scented the decks with a fragrance which recalled the Astor Library, and made one look about for concealed editions *de luxe* of Ruskin or the Aldine poets. But we discovered that the Russia leather bindings were on the sailors' legs, and that of any other literature than a restaurant-tariff the vessel was quite innocent. Its library was its living cargo, and a more curious and motley collection it would be hard to assemble. Between decks were stowed some hundreds of people, who were, most of them, pilgrims on their return from Mecca. It lessened a little the respect with which one had learned to look upon the pilgrim of whatever species, to perceive that these were most of them surrounded by comforts which, while they did not affect their dirtiness, must have contributed to make their journey one of greatly lightened hardship. As they lay about the decks upon soft, handsome rugs, sipping their coffee, and rolling their cigarettes, or smoking hubble-bubble pipes, they seemed as little

like palmers as any of their fellow-passengers. But if one's respect was somewhat lessened on witnessing the facility with which they softened the hardships of their self-imposed vocation, it rose again as sunset approached, and they set about the performance of their evening devotions. There was an utter absence of ostentation in the way in which each Moslem spread his bit of carpet, and, turning his face eastward, murmured his prayer to Allah. And, most noticeable of all, by virtue of its contrast with what is to be observed among ourselves, this open reverence did not fail in those who were of a rank superior to that of the pilgrims. Among the first cabin passengers there was only one Mohammedan, a middle-aged man, in a somewhat severe Syrian costume. Alone he paced the deck for an hour before the sun vanished beneath the horizon, and then putting off his shoes where he stood, and with eyes bent toward Mecca, he knelt with his forehead bowed upon the deck, and "prayed as he did aforetime." The gay throng upon the deck passed and repassed him with jest and sneer; laughter which he must have been dull indeed had he not discerned that he himself had provoked, rang in his ears; but his face

was, through all, as unmoved as if he had been both deaf and blind. One could not but wish that our modern Christianity, so shamedfaced even in its most scant exhibitions of reverence, could learn something of the fearless openness which everywhere distinguishes the Oriental.

Perhaps it was the contrast with this sunset scene which made the scene below, a little later, so much less welcome. In the cabin, as well as in the forecastle, was an assemblage of pilgrims not Moslem but Christian. It is not usual to go to Jerusalem before March, but there were some of our country-people on board who were bound thither, and who beguiled the last night before touching the consecrated soil of the Holy Land by an animated and prolonged discussion as to the latest fluctuations in stocks, and the probable risks of contingent investments. And yet they were going to Jerusalem with no other motive, so far as one could learn, than a reverent curiosity to see the most hallowed spot on earth!

Falling asleep amid some such speculations, I was awakened the next morning by the soft, almost beseeching voice of my dragoman, who, Moslem though he was, evidently thought no more charitably of my own rever-

ence for Palestine than I had done of my neighbors'. "It is after six, sir," he reproachfully remonstrated, "and all the Christian gentlemen are on deck. Jaffa is in sight." In one sense his words were only partially true. As I climbed the deck a little later, a blaze of sunshine flashed a broad path across the sea, and hid everything in its dazzling splendor. On either hand the eye caught a scanty fringe of buildings, but Jaffa itself—the Joppa of the New Testament—was eclipsed by the sun, which was just rising behind it. It did not matter, however. It was all holy ground, and as my glass ranged the coast, the snows of Carmel gleamed at the far left, and the hills of Judea lay in violet beauty to the right. Why profane the emotions of such a moment by attempting to reproduce them! It was in vain that one tried to remember Peter and Cornelius and Dorcas, and all the godly men and women whose names have been associated with Joppa. That distant landscape stood not so much for Joppa as for the land of the Son of Mary, who was the Son of God. And remembering Whose eyes had once overlooked those same hills and slopes, all other thoughts were hushed, all other names forgotten.

II.

Jaffa.

Getting on Shore—Turks and Yankees—A Convent and an Orangery—Western Incredulity—The Start—A Hallowed Highway.

To land at Jaffa is one of the feats of modern seamanship. It is true that tradition makes it the building-place of the Ark, but if it was, one can almost sympathize with the scepticism which sneered at Noah's apparently quixotic undertaking. Launched at Jaffa the Ark could never have been, save by the deluge which lifted it off the stocks; supposing, that is to say, that the coast-line in those days was such as it is to-day. A ragged reef of rocks fences in the town with a deadly wall of granite, and it was through a narrow gap in this, scarcely twenty feet wide, that the little felucca, which brought us from ship to shore, felt her way into the quieter waters beyond.

Fortunately the sea was calm, and the sun was scarce two hours high, when we found ourselves standing upon Syrian soil.

What a contrast to all the traditions of that soil in the babel of tongues which welcomed us! Seaport though it has been, for so many changing centuries, it seems to have been reserved for Turkish rule to make Joppa the most perplexing *olla podrida* of eastern and western nationalities. Every people whose soil borders on the Mediterranean, from Spain to the Bosphorus, jostles you in the narrow streets, and as you emerge from them, you see a suburban group of buildings, so unmistakably "Yankee" in their white clapboard investiture, and with their smart green blinds, that you remember suddenly that Jaffa is also the scene of that rather dismal experiment known as the "American Colony." American it no longer is, though a few of the original settlers still linger amid the scenes of their dissensions and their disappointments. But what even American smartness could not do, on this unfriendly shore, German thrift is accomplishing with less ostentation, and with surer promise of success. A lad acted as our guide to the gardens of the Franciscan Convent, who called himself American born, but

his Arabic was far more fluent than his English speech; and in his jacket and trousers he looked like a waif, eastern in speech and manner, and western only in his raiment.

He served us well and faithfully, however, and led us to a scene which literally beggars description. The garden of the Franciscan Convent was not far from our little inn, and the way thither lay through a narrow lane, with a gigantic hedge of cactus on either hand. Such a natural fence we had not seen before, but a better one it would be impossible to devise. Growing with a wanton luxuriance, and to a height of some twelve or fifteen feet, it offered a screen for the garden treasures hidden behind it, which the most daring depredator would be slow to assail. Once entangled and impaled amid its thorny points, escape would be hopeless. We followed its windings a little way, till we found our progress barred by a weather-stained and thoroughly monastic-looking gate, which was opened, on knocking, by an Arab laborer, who scanned us warily, and then admitted us. The enclosure, which is called a garden, is rather a huge orangery, varied with lemon and other fruit-trees, and edged, as we found on penetrating its labyrinths, with almond-trees in all

the virgin beauty of perfect flower. We had gone but a little way when we were met by the ecclesiastic who presides over the Convent, and who accompanied us through the grounds. There was a trace of the friar in the cord which was knotted about his waist, and in the beads which hung at his side. But save for these, he had the aspect of a hale old farmer —as indeed he was. Full-bearded as a backwoodsman, with broad shoulders and vigorous stride, his whole air, as he moved about among his beloved orange-trees, smacked of anything rather than the cloister. And his pride in these fruits of his toil was certainly pardonable. I had seen orange groves in many a town on the banks of the Nile, and had threaded my way among the gardens of the Viceroy, both at Cairo and at Siout in upper Egypt, but the best of them was little better than a desert, compared with these acres of glistening verdure, and fragrant blossoms, and masses of golden fruit. Such a scene cannot be described, without language of seeming exaggeration; but I may mention that I measured one of the oranges which the *padre* kindly plucked for us, and that its circumference was somewhat over eighteen inches. Indeed, the fruit of these gardens has long been widely famous,

and it is believed that they are watered by subterranean streams, which at once fill the huge wells which the monks have dug, and enrich the fertile soil above them. Be this as it may, we could understand the healthy contentment of the old friar, and our only wonder was that a brotherhood with so goodly a heritage did not include a larger number. But one other monk, the old man told us, made up the whole household. He himself had spent there a long life, and as one noted the graceful facility with which he used his native Italian tongue, and the courtly gentleness which marked his bearing, one could not but speculate as to the history which explained his monkish habit and his life-long exile.

It is perhaps a discreditable admission to make, but I must needs own that, during our stay in Jaffa, we did not visit the house of Simon the Tanner, the scene of Peter's vision, nor the residence of Tabitha, the Dorcas of the early Church. If only we could have forgotten Joppa's checkered history; if only we could somehow have eliminated from our recollection the stubborn facts of Roman and Norman and Turkish conquests; if only we could, by any subtlety of logic, have reasoned ourselves out of the unwelcome certainty that

Vespasian and Godfrey de Bouillon and Saladin and Sultan had, each in his turn, dispersed and pulverized every meanest habitation in the town, we might have found motive enough to go and look at something which, by some remotest possibility, was standing when Peter, looking westward toward the Gentile world, saw the vision which taught his stubborn Israelitish prejudices so new and large a lesson. But no; when a pilgrim of comparatively modern times, Bertrand de la Broquiére, who visited Jaffa in the fifteenth century, has recorded that he found the city so utterly razed that no solitary wall or roof was left, and that his only shelter from the burning sun was a rude reed hut, even the most sanguine credulity must yield. Yet I think we felt a little bit ashamed when, meeting some of our fellow-voyagers at the breakfast-table of the inn, we found that we were alone in our apathetic incredulity, and that one of them had even lingered long enough to make a careful and graphic sketch, under which was written, "The House of Simon the Tanner!" And yet this is called the age of scepticism!

It is at Jaffa that one realizes that he has fairly left behind him the ordinary convenien-

ces of civilization. Between Jaffa and Jerusalem the Sultan, provoked, it is said, by a taunt from the late Emperor of the French, has constructed a road over which it is possible for a wheeled carriage to pass; but his sympathy for the modern pilgrim, or his courtesy to Eugenie, for whose convenience, it is said, the road was originally constructed, seems to have been exhausted in the process of making the substructure; for the superstructure is reported to be in a condition almost impassable to any wheeled conveyance. At any rate, a saddle seemed the freest and most congenial seat for such a journey, and though we engaged a carriage, we determined to use it as little as possible.

The mounting and departure of even a small party involves an amount of bustle, and includes a little army of attendants, sufficient to lend to the expedition an excitement quite its own. The baggage and tents are laden on mules; there is a palanquin for the more delicate and timid traveller; and the shouts of the muleteers, the imperious commands of our conductor, and the never-ending clamor of our Arab outriders, combine to make up a scene of strange confusion. There was a soothing sense of stillness as we

escaped from the door of the inn, and, quitting the bustle of the town, found ourselves, erelong, crossing the plain of Sharon, barren indeed of the roses that once made it so fair a vision, but dotted here and there with the intensely brilliant blossoms of the *cocliquot*, which grows wild everywhere in central Palestine, even upon soil the most sterile. As we dismounted and gathered a handful of them, their lavish wealth of coloring gave new meaning to the words, "If God so clothe the grass of the field;" for these exquisite blossoms are here accounted as of no more value than the merest weed.

The road from Jaffa to Jerusalem runs past the village of Ramleh, which some have fixed upon as the site of the ancient Arimathea, and where to-day there is a Latin convent which is the refuge of the benighted traveller. Here we had arranged to pass our first night, and from thence to push on, in a single day, to Jerusalem. It is only a few hours' ride from Jaffa to the convent, but one likes to make acquaintance with his horse for the first hour or two, and above all to take in an actual sense of his surroundings, without confusion or hurry.

For there is something indescribably

strange in the first view of scenes which the Bible has hallowed, and which still endure as memorials of the dealings of God with His chosen people. Comparatively, there is little of interest between Jaffa and Ramleh, and yet on your right as you ride on, just beyond yonder ridge, lies Philistia, and, embowered in trees to your left, gleam the white roofs of that Lydda where once Peter tarried among the Christian converts of the village, and where he healed the bedridden Æneas. You have to pause to realize whose were the feet, whether of eager Apostles or of shrinking converts, that have traversed these same plains and dwelt in these same villages. And when one lifts his eyes, there, just before him, as it seems, rise those Judean hills that hide Jerusalem from his sight, standing upon the slopes of which Joshua looked down upon the fierce fight which his countrymen were making with the Amorites, in the memorable valley at his feet, and from whence, watching the changing fortunes of the day, he cried, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon!" Amid such scenes what does it matter that the foot of the Moslem profanes the sacred soil? They

may remove the ancient landmarks, and profane the holy places, but they cannot extinguish their hallowed associations. Still less can they stifle the emotions of awe and reverence with which the Christian wanderer must needs look upon scenery made forever memorable by those events which were turning-points in Hebrew history, even as it has been made forever sacred by the journeys and ministries of Apostles and martyrs.

III.

Ramleh.

A Mohammedan Graveyard—The Tower at Ramleh—A First Night in a Monastery—The Jerusalem Roadway—A First View of the Holy City.

It was an hour before sunset when, mounting the crest of a hill, the white tower and minarets of a distant village stood out clear and sharp on a distant slope. The sound of hoofs behind me announced the approach of mounted travellers, and turning my head, I found two Arabs rapidly overtaking me. "Ramleh?" I said, pointing to the distant towers, and getting for my answer a murmured assent, I knew that our halting-place for the night was now near at hand.

As we approached it, the solitary tower which distinguishes Ramleh from whatever point it is approached, came more distinctly

into view, and in a little while we were close upon the outskirts of the town, and saw on our right the extensive ruins of which the tower forms the most conspicuous feature. My companions were wearied with their day's journey, and anxious to push on to the shelter and repose of the convent; so, taking a mounted Arab as my escort, I turned into a narrow lane that opened from the main road, and, after a few moments, found myself threading my way among the graves of what was evidently a Mohammedan burying-ground. At a little distance, the gnarled and twisted trunks of the olive-trees with which it was planted, gave it the appearance of a New England apple-orchard, and the gray walls and square tombs, all alike blistered, and incrusted with scanty moss, made the scene still more familiar. The sheep were grazing among the graves, and the early Spring verdure mingled with the traces of harsher weather, as seen in the broken branches and the bleached faces of the rocks, made one think of some lowly God's-acre on one of our own northern hill-sides. Only, here the rude head-stones were each of them crowned with the coarse carving of the Moslem turban, without which no grave, whether of Sultan or fellah, is here accounted com-

plete. Passing on by the path winding among the graves, I came to a low archway of richly-hewn stone, and, riding through it, found myself in a large enclosure not unlike the close of a cathedral, round three sides of which ran the ruins of what must once have been a stately and beautiful cloister. Many of its arches are still almost perfect, and as the space which they enclose is closely carpeted with turf, one recalled instinctively some such ruins as mark the site of Fountains or Tintern Abbey. The tall tower on the northern side of the enclosure stands almost intact, and though the Arabic inscription over its doorway bears the date A. H. 718, which is equivalent to A. D. 1318, it rises as square and complete as though it had been reared in our own time. The inscription which follows the date of its erection further records that it was reared by a son of "our Lord the Sultan, the martyr, the King el-Mansûr," and on the strength of this statement, no authority, so far as I can learn (with perhaps a single exception), seems disposed to dispute that the building was reared as a mosque, and by the Turks. And yet, if ever ruins proclaimed their Christian origin, these do. True, the sign of the Cross has been effaced, but anything more unlike Oriental arch-

itecture, anything more distinctly Norman-Gothic in its general characteristics, anything which betrays more unmistakably the handiwork of those warriors and builders who followed in the path of the Crusades—anything, to one who has become wonted to the aspect of ecclesiastical ruins in Europe, more thoroughly familiar, it would be hard to conceive. And with this view everything in the history of Ramleh falls in. We know that it was occupied by the Crusaders in 1099; that St. George was adopted as its patron saint; and that one of the buildings in the town, now in use as a mosque, was once a Christian church, with a nave and aisles, principal and side apses, a clerestory, and every other characteristic of the churches of that period. We know that for at least 200 years it was a Christian city, and one, as standing at the junction of the great highways from Damascus to Egypt, and from Joppa to Jerusalem, of no mean importance. And if so, what more probable than that, in the days when Richard the Lion-hearted had his headquarters at Ramleh, this noble tower and its surrounding cloisters, so expressive of the spirit of their builders in their simple, sturdy grandeur, should have been built and hallowed for Christian uses?

At any rate, it was in such a faith that I climbed to its summit and looked off, as the day was dying out of the sky, upon the blue Mediterranean on the one hand, and the mountains of Judea on the other. And there was something of thankfulness in the thought that if, once, the grand old tower had crowned a Christian sanctuary, time had not spared that sanctuary to be profaned by Moslem feet, nor to see the Cross upon its summit displaced by the Crescent and the Star.

One's first night within monastic walls is a somewhat memorable experience, even though no monastic vows have preceded it. Ours was made memorable chiefly by the comfort of our quarters and the simple cordiality of our welcome. The tales of travellers had prepared us for a dirty bed and a starved table; but our cells were spotless in their cleanliness, and if a little bare as to the walls, and a little hard as to the pillows, yet the hours spent in the saddle had prepared us for a sleep which did not need to be courted with any luxurious appliances. Our fare, too, was wholesome, if simple, and it was served by a cheery, healthy-looking young friar, who made us thoroughly at home. He was Spanish, as were, we understood, the other

three or four members of the Order (all were Franciscans), who were associated with him. One of them, we learned, presided in the kitchen, and after our evening meal, our whole party adjourned thither and exchanged salutations with him. It seemed an odd realization of a "religious" vocation to spend one's days cooking for Protestants, Jews, Turks, heretics, and infidels, who might chance to knock at the convent-gate for food and lodging with the means to pay for them; but the good brother seemed thoroughly happy in it, and could he have known that one of our fellow-travellers had, with facile pencil and artistic eye, made a most clever sketch of him, he would doubtless have rejoiced to feel that having served many a dish with the juice of his native olive, he was in turn to be "done in oil" himself.

It was not yet daylight when we were roused, the next morning, for our start, nor long before we found ourselves once more in the saddle. The morning was lovely, and the air, at once bracing and invigorating, made mere motion a delight. Our way lay past point after point of interest; now Gezer, the long-lost royal city, whose king, attempting to relieve Lachish, was killed by Joshua;

and then in rapid succession past Ajalon, Kirjath-jearim, and the little valley of Elah. It is true that some authorities dispute the identity of the latter, and maintain that it lay some fifteen miles westward, nearer to the ancient Philistia. If they are right, then the little brook which we crossed, and in which I watered my horse, is *not* that from which David chose his smooth stone; but I preferred to believe that it was, and if there was no better evidence, the rounded pebbles with which its bed was strown furnished an argument not without its weight.

As the traveller leaves the brook, the road grows narrower and the ascent steeper, and for those who are at home in it, the saddle is undoubtedly the most comfortable means of journeying to Jerusalem. But it ought to be known, for the benefit of those who are timid, or unwonted to horseback exercise, that there is a made carriage-way from Jaffa to the very walls of Jerusalem, and that its only defect is that it is very rough. English guide-books, written by those who are accustomed to English roads, as smooth as a floor and nearly as level, speak of the carriage-way to Jerusalem as all but impassable. It is entirely passable to any one who does not

mind being well jolted—jolted as one used to be in the early days of travel in our own White Hills. And, as a matter of fact, it is constantly traversed by spring wagons which make the journey from Jaffa sometimes in a single day. In a word, Jerusalem is entirely accessible to any but the most helpless invalid.

And that it is, must needs rob its approach of much of its old romance. In days when, as the Holy City to Jew, Turk, and Christian alike, it was the object of devoutest pilgrimage, a journey to Jerusalem was full of experiences either of danger or of surprise. But our pilgrimage was marked by nothing more dangerous than the overturning of a palanquin in which one of our party was travelling, and the only surprise was from the approach of a mounted scout sent out in advance to "tout" for a Jerusalem hotel.

As he charged down upon us, mounted upon his fleet and flying steed, there was a cry, "The Bedouins!" but as he rode up he drew upon us, not a pistol, but a hotel card, and demanded, not our purses, but our patronage. It was, perhaps, a wholesome preparation for further disappointments, and yet no experience of the commonplace could

chill the emotions of awe and reverence and thankfulness with which, a little later, we climbed the last ascent that barred our way, and saw, lying a little before us, belted round by its eternal sentinels, the hills—Jerusalem!

IV.

Jerusalem.

From the House-top—The "Via Dolorosa"—The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Mosque of Omar—The Pool of Bethesda.

It was a brilliant morning which greeted us when we climbed the house-top to begin there our first day in Jerusalem. Despite the prophecies of flood and cold with which we had been warned if we attempted to see the Holy Land in February, the sky was as clear as the brightest October day, and the sun as warm as many a one in our own mid-Summer. The Syrian air has more life in it

than that of Egypt, and after enervating days, when the mid-day sun upon the Nile was for a little while an almost intolerable burden, it was singularly exhilarating to breathe once more the air of the hills.

And one needs something exhilarating to sustain him amid the inevitable disappointments of first days in Jerusalem. For, familiar as one's reading may have made him with all in the Holy City that is incongruous with its consecrated associations, the actual contact with those incongruities is inexpressibly shocking—I had almost written sickening. We had meant to go, first, upon the walls, which, being comparatively modern, are in a fair state of preservation, and then, passing on from point to point in their circumference, take in the general outlines of the neighborhood and the principal localities of interest. In such comparative solitude, I had said to myself, one would have a chance to grasp the topography of Jerusalem, undisturbed for once by the droning impertinences of a guide, or by dismal clamors for *backsheesh*. Circumstances, however, turned our footsteps another way, and as I found myself on the road to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, it was with the feeling that a painful task would soon be

over, and one be left freer for more congenial scenes. Some there are, doubtless, who can go and witness the battle-ground of Christian sects over what ought to be the most hallowed spot on earth, and be so filled with the loftier emotions of its supposed sacred associations, as to feel no shock in the recollection that to-day Christians of different names are kept, at Easter-tide, from tearing each other to pieces, simply by the coarse power of the Turkish police. But I confess I recoiled from looking upon a spot which must needs revive such memories, and awaken impressions so unwelcome. Would that what I did see had cost me nothing more! How shall I express the sense of shame, the utter loathing at the spectacle of bitter incongruity which now salutes the pilgrim to the tomb of Christ, with which one who comes there for the first time must, as it seems to me, needs be filled? Turning out of a narrow street filled with Jew money-changers and shabby dealers in shabbier wares, and which is called, oddly enough, Christian street, you find yourself descending a flight of steps, which was once, you are told, a part of the *Via Dolorosa*. Along its sides, as you pass down, are squatted hawkers of beads, carved shells, crosses, and other similar wares,

supposed to have attractions as memorials of the Holy City, jumbled together in one uninviting hodge-podge with cheap jewelry, cigarette-holders, tobacco-pouches, and the like—the whole being arranged with a thrifty eye to the patronage both of the devout and the profane. Past these the way lies across an open square, crowded with hucksters in tawdry images and cheap ear-rings, until one enters the church which the mother of Constantine reared over the spot where once was laid the body of the dead Christ. It is not a large structure, but its roof covers, or claims to cover, almost every spot which the Christian heart reveres from its associations with the last hours of our Lord's earthly life. In the face of the most obvious improbability, nay, in utter disregard of the most absurd contradictions, one is shown scenes and places at once the most remote and disconnected. The Holy Sepulchre, the hill of Calvary, the scenes of the mockery, are all pointed out as scarce a hundred feet from each other. You mount a flight of stairs and have pointed out to you the holes in which the three crosses stood, and within a foot or two of one of them the fracture where the "rocks were rent." And yet, *underneath this very spot* is a robing-room

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or sacristy, which is regarded as having no particular sanctity whatever! But I have no heart to pursue the story. Of course we saw all that the records of travellers have made so familiar, and as we looked, the sense of the dreary hollowness and bitter mockery of the whole grew every moment more keen. Standing under the dome, one noted the Coptic chapel, the Greek altars, the Armenian cloisters, and Roman, Russian, and Austrian sanctuaries and shrines. But even their own priests treated them with the scantiest respect, and Arabs and Moslems, strolling to and fro, did not even uncover themselves in the holy place. Our guide was a native of Jerusalem, who called himself a "Christian Greek," by which I presume he meant a member of the Greek Church; but he told his tale with an air which showed how slight a realization of the scenes of which he spoke had ever crossed his mind, and even while he told it, our Cairene dragoman, following us about with an air of compassionate contempt for the silly superstitions of the Christians, bade the lad sharply to beware how he spattered his dapper garments with the drippings of his candle.

And so our pilgrimage to the supposed scene of the Resurrection came to an end.

It would have lacked its wonted accompaniment if the greasy-looking ecclesiastic who lighted us into the Holy Sepulchre, and who sprinkled us while we lingered there with rose-water (why, I could not divine), had let us out again without an eye hungry for *backsheesh*, and still more would our experience of sight-seeing in the East have been exceptional if we had escaped from the porch of the church without a more peremptory challenge of the same purport. Nor did we. When we entered, the church doors were wide open, with no sign or hint of concealed guardians. But when we undertook to leave, the doors were brusquely closed in our faces, and we had to buy our way out with ample fees. It formed a fitting conclusion to the whole that, as we turned once more into the *Via Dolorosa*, the most conspicuous legend which confronted us was written over a drinking-shop, which thrust itself forward with offers of "*Vins et Bonbons des toutes les Varieties.*" And this was the street and these were the scenes that the Saviour of the world had hallowed, in the supreme moments of His earthly life! Would it not have been better never to have seen them at all, than, seeing them, to find in the seeing so much

that shocked and wounded one's every sentiment of reverence? As I asked myself this question, I found myself envying one of my companions, whose emotions until that moment I had hardly regarded. He was a Maltese servant in attendance upon our party, who had gone with us into every chapel, crypt, cave, and cloister which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre included. And to him they had all been real; no shrine so tawdry, no relic so impudent a fraud, no pretended scene of a great event so utterly and absolutely improbable, but that he had bent his knee and bowed his head before it in deepest homage of superstitious reverence. "Happy ignorance—blessed credulity," one found himself almost in peril of crying, "so willing to be persuaded, nay, so eager to believe."

Was it with a keen Moslem sense of the mockery of the contrast, that our Mohammedan dragoman arranged, in the afternoon, that we should go and see the Mosque of Omar? At any rate, one's sense of humiliation as a Christian, could hardly have been made keener than by some such process. Standing amid the cool and spacious stillness of the beautiful enclosure known as the Haram, the mosque rises from the summit of Mount

Moriah in a stately majesty which utterly eclipses every other building in Jerusalem. And within, it is as beautiful as it is noble without. Its vast proportions, splendid adornments, and rich yet chastened light, make it a structure fitted in every way to awaken reverence and quicken devotion. As one enters it he exclaims instinctively, "If it is well that any human superstructure should mark the place hallowed as the sepulchre of Christ, here is a building worthy for such a use." As noble in its pure and stainless simplicity as the church of Helena is impure and ignoble in its tawdry shabbiness, it makes one understand how the Turk must turn from its doors with a fresh pride in his own faith and his own prophet, and with a fresh scorn for those Christians who can boast and wrangle so much, and yet build and adorn so poorly.

Perhaps it was to teach us a healthier and larger view of the whole matter that our way home, at the end of the day, led us past the spot which was once the pool of Bethesda. Now it is no longer a pool at all, but simply a yawning pit, over whose mouth might be written the legend, "Rubbish shot here," and from whose depths rose the stench of every

imaginable and unimaginable form of filth and garbage. And yet here, once, an angel came down and troubled the waters, and he who first descended into them was healed.

And even as the Divine ministry of healing has not vanished out of the world, though angels no longer trouble any earthly waters, even so the world's heart of reverence and love for Christ is not dead, though foolish men profane His last resting-place with tawdry ceremonial, or dishonor it with mutual hatreds and dissensions!

V.

Outside the Walls of Jerusalem.

David's Tomb—The Field Aceldama—The Pool of Siloam—The Garden of Gethsemane.

No matter what view the traveller may take of the vexed question of the topography of Jerusalem, the fact still remains that the places of greatest interest are those outside its walls; for, even if it be possible to prove

that the nominal site of the Holy Sepulchre is the real site, it still seems more than probable that every other most sacred spot was beyond the line of the present fortifications. There was infinite relief, therefore, in passing the Jaffa gate, in the thought that one's way was to lie, for at least a single afternoon, through scenery concerning whose identity there could be but little doubt.

The venerable Bishop of Jerusalem, Dr. Gobat, had mentioned, in answer to a question as to the trustworthiness of tradition concerning sacred places in and about the Holy City, that he could feel positively certain only concerning three. It was to one of these, the tomb of David, that our guide first led us, and if we had consented to judge it by superficial appearances, our faith would have been sorely shaken. Despite the undoubted fact that Jerusalem has been razed to the ground again and again, and that, except the tower of Hippicus, and possibly one or two other fragments of buildings, there is nothing now remaining above the surface that is more than a few hundred years old—despite the fact, too, that whatever tombs are ancient must needs be below the level of the old city, on the buried ruins of which the

present city is built; despite the fact that an elevated structure as a place of burial is a violation of all the usages of the East, we were nevertheless taken *upstairs* into a very modern looking building, standing on the southern slope of Mount Zion, and shown a sarcophagus said to contain the remains of David, stowed away in an upper room! But little more was needed to complete the ghastly travesty of the whole thing, and that little was not wanting. The tomb, it seemed, formed a sort of appendage to a Moslem mosque. The custodian was a Mohammedan, whose harem was lodged almost at its very door, and the drapery, at once cheap, tawdry, and shabby, with which it was hung about, was in no wise different from that which we had seen adorning the tomb of many a Arab sheik. As if to snap the last lingering thread of one's credulity, the *catafalque*, or tomb, was constructed so as to appear about ten or twelve feet long; and when I asked one of our Moslem attendants if he supposed David to have been so tall a man, he gravely assured me that he had no doubt of it!

On the other hand there is a chain of testimony which, though I may not linger to

rehearse it here, seems to verify the identity of the spot with singular conclusiveness. We know that in St. Peter's time, to quote his own words concerning David's tomb (Acts ii. 29), "his sepulchre is with us to this day;" and it is probable that the very curiosity which led Jerome, and other Christians after him, to devote themselves almost exclusively to the identification of places having Christian associations, has preserved this spot from a curiosity which was sometimes as destructive as it was irreverent.

There is something profoundly impressive in the view that greets one as, riding forth from the enclosure which stands about the tomb of David, his eye falls on the bleak and distant hill-side, which tradition connects with the suicide of Judas. Here and there upon its rugged steeps there are trees, which overhang a precipice whose sheer descent is some forty or fifty feet. If one ever hung suspended from a branch of these trees, it is easy to see how the breaking limb would have hurled his body to be torn and crushed upon the rocks below. And thus the miserable fate of the traitor and apostate lives before the eye in a horrible reality. As one thinks of the royal sinner, guilty and stained with *his* crime, but

finding his way back at last through tears and repentance into the favor of the Father, and then of that other, whose sin, not of impulse, but of craft and of deliberation, suffered him to find no place for repentance, there rises to the view that bleak and barren slope on which he took his own wretched life, and which seems a fitting setting to the picture of so dark an end.

It is with a sense of relief that one rides on, and past such scenes, and, leaving the valley of Hinnom and the field of Aceldama behind him, finds his way leading down the winding bank of the Kedron to the Pool of Siloam. It is to-day as it was two thousand years ago, a centre of blessing alike to towns-people and wayfarer. As we approached it, flocks were grouped near it on every hand, and dismounted horsemen, camel-drivers, and donkey-boys were all eagerly slaking their thirst with its cool and limpid waters. The pool or spring itself lies hidden away beneath a subterranean archway, which is probably of comparatively modern date, but the stair-way leading down to the pool looks as though it might have been worn by the feet of a hundred generations, and I found myself, as I lingered at its head, picturing the approach of one whose sightless

eyes and faltering steps must have aptly symboled the hesitating faith with which he felt his way down to those waters which were to give him back his sight. With what a different step he must have climbed those stairs again, as, running back, he knelt to bless the Hand that had so wonderfully healed him!

Turning to the left from the Pool of Siloam, the way round the walls of Jerusalem lies northward past the town of the same name, where once stood the tower which, falling, killed eighteen persons, and past the tombs of Absalom, Jehoshaphat, Zecharias the martyr, and St. James the Just. At least these are the names assigned to some imposing structures concerning whose identity, however, there is only the most doubtful evidence. Why was it that we looked with most interest (I had almost written sympathy) at the reputed tomb of Absalom? At any rate I did not find myself moved to imitate a custom of the land which oddly enough has found Christian imitators. Both Moslem and Israelite, it seems, take pains, when passing the tomb, to hurl a stone at it as an expression of their horror at the unfilial conduct of Absalom; and we had the example of some eminent Christian travellers held up to us as a motive for doing the

same. If we declined, it was certainly from no disposition to estimate lightly the sin of that son who all but broke his father's heart. But it is questionable whether such an utterly senseless custom, no matter how sanctioned, can have any other than a most unwholesome effect upon the ignorant Arabs who witness it.

Our way ended, ere we turned into the city again, by St. Stephen's Gate, at the Garden of Gethsemane. Here, as at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Latin Christianity has done all that it can to efface all traces of the identity of the spot. There is everything in the situation of the Garden of Gethsemane, as shown to-day, to indicate that it occupies a site near that consecrated scene of the Saviour's agony. It is on the way from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, it is near the Kedron, it is shaded by venerable olive trees. But, strangely enough, the very modern wall which encloses it excludes that part of the ground directly bordering upon the brook Kedron, close to which was undoubtedly the thickest shade, and therefore the most complete retirement in the whole garden. And then so much of the garden as is enclosed is deformed and disfigured by petty subdivisions of wooden palings, and surrounded by some

dozen "stations" with the most pitifully crude and hideous statuary on a diminutive scale. Add to this a bland and plausible old monk, who buzzes about the garden gathering nosegays, which he tenders with an insinuating smile, and for which he expects a liberal *backsheesh*, and you have wellnigh every influence which could conspire to destroy the tender and sacred associations of the place. But not quite every such influence, for as you follow a path running round the inside of the walls, you come upon a tank or reservoir, evidently of recent construction, and, as evidently, of cheap and perishable material, on which is blazoned in broad and staring capitals the name of its American donor! The utmost reach of questionable taste, and still more questionable reverence, could not well go further than this.

And yet, no pettinesses of human ornament or human impertinence can quite destroy the influence of the spot. The very trees, which may easily be twelve hundred years old, and which may as easily (as is the case with the olive) have sprung from the roots of other trees long ago cut down, stand as worn and weather-beaten sentinels over a spot whose every surrounding marks it as

that walk in which our Lord wrestled in darkness and alone; and as one lifts his eyes from the shadows which gather beside the Kedron, he sees above him—as who shall say the Master did not see it?—that gate from which the traitor and his companions must needs have issued as they came to take Him; and, rising beyond, the towers of that Jerusalem, whose children were, on the morrow, to reject Him with mockery and scorn. It is true that nearly two thousand years have come and gone since then, but Olivet stands looking down upon the pilgrim of to-day, as its silent summit bent over the kneeling Christ, whose feet had then so lately climbed its streets; and the banks of the Kedron, the neighboring road to Bethany, and every least and lowliest lineament of the landscape salutes one now as then. And so it was in vain that a childish sentimentalism had profaned and disfigured the sacred spot with its tawdry adornments. Its incomparable spell was upon it, and we threaded its narrow paths with hushed voices and with throbbing hearts.

VI.

Olivet and Bethany.

A Syrian Landscape—The Mount of Olives—An Ancient Tomb—The Road from Bethany to Jerusalem.

The one spot which the eye instinctively seeks from any elevation near Jerusalem is the Mount of Olives. It is not the most conspicuous feature in a view from the neighboring hills, and the stately domes of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Mosque of Omar far eclipse it in those characteristics which at first arrest attention. But the eye turns from them almost as soon as their glittering finials have caught its notice. They are unmistakably modern and unmistakably artificial. But as one looks from whatever point at Olivet, its supreme charm is that it has no other adornment than nature. True, there are a few scattered

dwellings and the ugly minaret of a species of dwarfed mosque near its summit; but these are hardly noticeable from a distance, and they do not greatly mar the simple unity of the whole picture. As I saw it, and as it has doubtless looked to thousands of other pilgrims, it was the very abode of peace and rest. There are few strong contrasts in a Syrian landscape. The soft gray stone of the houses, the equally soft or hazy green of the olive-groves, and (at any rate in the month of February) the delicate verdure of turf and shrub, just putting on their Spring freshness, gave to the whole picture a cool and quiet hue, which art has often striven to reproduce, but which the eye must see for itself adequately to appreciate. How shall I describe the emotion of that Sunday afternoon on which, literally with an open Bible in hand, I climbed its peaceful slopes, recalling step by step the sacred events and the Divine footsteps by which it has been forever hallowed! Here, indeed, as everywhere, one's instincts of reverence and one's sense of fitness are wounded and jarred upon by the presence of that alien race who, as conquerors of the Jew, have spoiled his holy places and pitched their tents amid the very

courts of his temple. The dirty little mosque to which I have referred, turned out to be the objective point of our guide's ascent, and we consented to climb its shabby minaret for the sake of the view which was promised us from its summit. But when, on descending, we were greeted with rather jocose familiarity by the custodian of the place, who turned out to be a friend of our attendant, and offered chairs, coffee, and cigarettes, one's vexation of spirit was very real, and I fear there was something of indignant disgust in the mood in which, a little later, I turned away, when, in addition, the same patronizing Moslem offered to show me a footprint of Christ's within the enclosure of the mosque itself! It is this easy appropriation by Mohammedanism of everything that it has chosen to claim in the traditions both of the Israelite and of the Christian, which has undoubtedly been a secret of its success. But it makes one's blood boil sometimes to hear the condescending approval with which the Moslem speaks of "the Prophet Jesus," while scoffing at the Christian credulity which pays Him Divine honors.

It was with a very different feeling that we escaped from the precincts of the mosque, and

passed on through a corn-field to the little village of Bethany. I twisted my way down into the cave which is said to be the tomb of Lazarus, and visited also the house which is shown (by a coarse Arab virago, who "chaffed" our guide, and evidently thought the whole expedition an amusing farce) as that of Martha and Mary. The former (which is evidently a natural cave or tomb) may be authentic, but the latter as obviously cannot be. Either way I confess I found it impossible to feel any interest in details about whose identity there must needs be abundant dispute. But it is with quite another feeling that one takes in the village of Bethany as a whole, in whose situation there is something inexpressibly beautiful and touching. I suppose it is because so much of the human side of Christ's character and ministry are there disclosed to us, in His undisguised pleasure in the house of the two sisters and Lazarus, and in the depth and tenderness of His affection for the latter, that we think of the village of Bethany with an interest so peculiar, and so different from that attaching to most other places associated with His earthly life. And when one sees it, such feelings seem, somehow, to get at once their explanation and their warrant. For

Bethany has the advantage of most convenient nearness to Jerusalem, and at the same time of peculiar and most restful isolation. We had approached it over the hill of Olivet, and by a by-path through such a corn-field as the Master passed on that Sabbath day when He and His disciples plucked and ate its ears of corn. But the usual road to Bethany is along the highway to Jericho, which passes round the south shoulder of the Mount of Olives, and which, after a few turns, leaves every vestige of the Holy City out of sight. Lying thus on the eastern slope of Olivet, Bethany looks off upon the valley along which winds the road to the Jordan, and every feature of which is at once singularly restful and rural; and this, as it seemed to one seeing it for the first time, must needs have been always its supreme charm. It is at once so near to Jerusalem, and yet so utterly removed from it. It is not a suburban village overlooking the Holy City, nor even any most distant outskirt of it. As the eye ranges the winding valley and the distant hills, they afford the perpetual refreshment of absolute repose.

Was it not this which made it so welcome a refuge, when the day was done, to the weary feet of Christ? Here, it is true, He found

the tenderest sympathy, and the most loyal and loving devotion, which poor human hearts could give Him. But here, too, He found what no human heart could give Him, the peace of comparative solitude, and the soothing influence of the infinite calm of nature. When the days were ended—those days of toil, and often seemingly fruitless argument—above all, when the whole human heart and brain were weary and sad with those disheartening encounters with a priesthood and people who would not understand Him, there must have been a rare and blessed refreshment in turning one's back upon all the noise and bustle and clamor of the thronged city and its pressing multitudes, to rest for a while in that lowly village, where no sight nor sound of the town intruded, and where that which spoke to eye and ear alike was the serene and soothing voice of nature. In such a home one can understand how the Master found a rest and peace which, supremely amid the closing hours of His ministry, He could look for nowhere else.

How long the neighborhood of Bethany and Olivet will retain these rural and retired characteristics is already becoming a doubt-

ful question. A French chapel, with its wonted appendage of a convent, has lately risen upon the western slopes of Olivet, and the Russians have begun a group of buildings of the same general character, on a conspicuous height near Bethany. As we passed the latter, toward sunset, our attention was attracted by a few persons standing about what seemed to be an open grave. Among them stood a priest of the Greek Rite, with an open book in his hands, from which he was, as I supposed, reading the Burial Service. On our nearer approach, one of the party advanced toward us and courteously invited us to enter the enclosure. On our doing so, it appeared that the little group was indeed gathered about a grave, but one at least a thousand years old. In digging over the ground, to set out trees, some Arab workmen had struck upon a hard substance some five or six feet below the surface, and this, on being examined, proved to be the top of a tomb belonging, in all probability, to the fifth or sixth century, when the whole site was occupied by an Armenian monastery. The top of the tomb was laid in mosaic work, which included an inscription, not decipherable by the priest, but which he was taking down for

further investigation. In an adjoining building we were shown what must once have been the floor of the refectory of the monastery—a piece of mosaic work some twenty-five feet square, and very rich in color and design. History has already recorded how poorly the monks who once dwelt there succeeded in perpetuating the Faith of the Master in the city that had crucified Him. It remains to be seen how much better their Russian successors, who, after a lapse of fifteen hundred years, propose to repeat the same experiment of monastic devotion, will succeed in reëstablishing that Faith among its Moslem conquerors.

The way from Bethany round the south-western slope of Olivet into Jerusalem is that which our Saviour took when, morning by morning, He went for the last time to the Temple. The road, scarped out of the rock, the winding path descending past Gethsemane—these may be as surely and as closely identified as anything in all Palestine. And following it, step by step, amid the lengthening shadows of the waning day, one could sympathize with the feeling of a distinguished Englishman who, visiting Jerusalem not long since, is said to have dismounted here, and

handing his bridle to his companion, to have said: "Will you lead my horse? I cannot ride here. If anything relating to the earthly life of Christ is certain, then it is certain that over this very road His feet have passed." Remembering this, we trod its winding course in silence, till suddenly a turn brought Jerusalem and the ancient site of the Temple into full and commanding view; and then, as if to the exclusion of every other thought, those words of infinite sorrow and of infinite meaning sprang straightway to our lips, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not!*"

VII.

Jericho.

Sheik Yusef—A Fantasia—A First View of the Dead Sea—The Fountain of Elisha—The Hermit of Mount Quarantana.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves;" and lest we should have a similar experience, we were accompanied out of Jerusalem on our way to Jericho by a mounted escort, whose leader answered to the name of "Sheik Yusef," and whose appearance was sufficiently warlike to strike terror into the heart of the most reckless Bedouin. And yet Yusef was himself a Bedawee, and the sheik of a Bedouin tribe. If he had not been guarding us, it is highly probable that he would have been taking toll of the travellers elsewhere in a somewhat less "regular" fashion, for the predatory instinct is ineradicable in the Bedouin, and to spoil

the Frank is the very first article in their creed. On the more frequented routes in Syria there is perhaps little danger from the Arab, but while we were at Jerusalem a party encamping near Solomon's Pools were robbed, and this notwithstanding the fact that their dragoman had hired two Turkish soldiers to mount guard over their tents. So we cheerfully paid Sheik Yusef five francs a day to escape the risk of being mulcted of a larger sum in a more irregular fashion.

And Yusef was worth the money. A better specimen of the race that conquered the Roman and drove out the Jew, it would not be easy to find. Tall and slight in figure, silent but observant in manner, he rode his Arab mare as if he had been born in the saddle, and was the wandering warrior in every look and gesture. Such men throw light upon the history of great revolutions. It was such a race—so resolute, frugal, and hardy—that Abu Obeidah, the Moslem commander of the army of the children of the Prophet, led against Jerusalem. Yusef slept upon the ground, ate a crust of bread and a few dates, and drank from the wayside spring. Even so, as the reader of Washington Irving's "Successors of Mahomet" will

recall, did the Caliph Omar, that Commander of the Faithful who, coming to take possession of Jerusalem, approached it riding on a camel, with a bag of dried bread, and another of dried dates, as his sole outfit. It was, wherever in all the possessions of Heraclius the Moslem met either the Christian or the Jew, trained self-restraint, and the toughness of a Spartan simplicity, that conquered races enervated by luxury, and demoralized by self-indulgence. And to-day the native Syrian is a formidable foe, simply because he has not altogether lost the same qualities. If ever the Jew is to win back from such a people his ancient heritage, he will have to exhibit something better than the pauperized pusillanimity which is his chief characteristic in Judea to-day.

But I have wandered from Yusef, even as Yusef occasionally wandered from us. In his case, however, it was merely to return amid a blaze of equestrian glory, which it was almost dazzling to witness. To beguile the tedium of our way, he and his mounted companion performed a "fantasia" (as it is called, with the accent on the letter *i*) for our entertainment. This consisted of the whole series of evolutions included in an encounter between two mounted lancers, and was the

very perfection of lightning-like rapidity and graceful movement. Yusef's companion was a somewhat ancient and toothless Arab, who was almost grotesque in his ugliness, but who assured us that he had once been the dragoman of Lady Hester Stanhope (who, as it will be remembered, afterward married an Arab sheik, and died near Damascus), and that Lady Hester had been at one time anxious to marry him. The story is only worth repeating as illustrating the boundless pride and conceit of a race who hold all other peoples in habitual contempt, and who believe, as I was told by a clergyman of the Church of England who has been for some time at work among them, that the Sultan, as the Commander of the Faithful, is literally the king of kings, and that he crowns every monarch who is reigning, as at present they all reign, *by his permission*, in Europe!

We were glad, however, of even ever so conceited an escort, especially when, while passing through one of the narrow and tortuous defiles which wind down into the valley of the Jordan, we came upon a little cairn or pile of stones, placed in the middle of the road to mark the spot where, a few days before, a Bedawee had been shot while attempt-

ing to rob some travellers. But all thoughts of possible danger were banished when, a few moments afterward, toward the close of our day's journey, another turn of the road brought us out upon an open plateau, from which we caught our first view of the Dead Sea. It was a moment of utter surprise. One expects the Dead Sea to be as dismal a feature in the landscape as its dreary name implies, and I recalled the strong phrase of a traveller who has written of it as "the blackened mirror of desolation." But in truth nothing could have been lovelier than the exquisite blue of its waters (rivalling the Mediterranean in this), and the soft and empurpled framework of its surrounding hills. The view of modern Jericho, on the other hand, which lay before us at our feet, was fa more depressing; and even the miserable Arab huts which compose it seem to rest under the ban of that ancient curse which long ago forbade the daring that should venture to rebuild it: "Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city, Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born" (Joshua vi. 26).

Our party was weary and way-worn by the time we reached the mud hut called, by a

most generous courtesy, the "hotel," where we were to lodge for the night, and with a single companion I rode on to visit what remains of ancient Jericho, and to see, also, the fountain now known as Ain es Sultan, which a very strong chain of testimony indicates as that whose waters were cured of their bitterness by Elisha. Dismounting, we tasted the stream that bursts out at the base of the hill, and found it at once sweetish and tepid. The remains of a large basin can be traced close to it, indicating that in other days the water must have been husbanded as superior to the brackish streams close to the Dead Sea. Of the ancient Jericho itself there is literally nothing visible above the surface of the ground, except perhaps one or two huge rubbish heaps which have been dug over recently by Captain Wilson and other English explorers, but without success. And so there was little to distract one's thoughts from the companion of Elijah, who had so early in his greater responsibility stood beside the bubbling spring in which now our horses quenched their thirst. On our way down into the valley, we had skirted for a little the Wady Kelt, undoubtedly the Brook Kerith, or Cherith, where Elijah was fed by the

ravens (I. Kings xvii. 1–7), and, peering down into its shadowy depths, one realizes the loneliness which its gloomy retirement involved. On the contrary, standing beside Ain es Sultan it seemed as if a site commanding the whole of the broad valley of the Jordan had been chosen on which Elisha should vindicate his authority as the successor of the elder prophet.

There remained scarcely an hour of daylight when we had finished our explorations, but above us rose Mount Quarantana, which tradition has associated with our Lord's Temptation, and dotting its face at an elevation of several hundred feet were some rows of hermits' cells, formerly occupied by religious devotees, but, as we understood, long since abandoned. There was a tradition that some of them contained remains of former decorations in color and carving, and as my companion was an artist, we determined to scale the side of the mountain and examine them. The scramble up the narrow path, literally scratched out of the rocky face of the mountain, was no light undertaking; but we were sorely perplexed when we found our progress barred by an iron door, which, however, yielded to pressure, and admitted us to a smooth open space

formed by a projecting rock, and forming an entrance to a series of caves running along the face and into the centre of the mountain. In one of these a fire was burning, and presently, pushing aside a curtain which closed an opening opposite to that by which we had entered, a venerable looking man came forward, and greeting us with grave courtesy, tendered us the hospitalities of his hermit retreat. He turned out to be a monk of the Greek Church, who, after a long life spent as a sailor, during which he had visited Australia, Liverpool, New York, and other ports, had retired to this solitary spot to spend the remainder of his days in acts of religious devotion. I shall never forget those sombre and mysterious surroundings, with their labyrinths of rocky chambers, amid which, as the night closed down, a moving lamp carried by one or the other of this monk's only companions, flashed fitfully, casting ghostly shadows as it was borne to and fro. It was verily a hermit solitude, and as we left it and felt our way down again in the gathering darkness, we found ourselves wondering what had been the vicissitudes of that restless and roaming life which had found its way hither at last, to rest and pray, and, mayhap, to repent, with strong crying and tears.

VIII.

The Dead Sea and the Jordan.

A Bath in the Dead Sea—Some Historic Memories—Crossing the Jordan—An Arab Sword Dance.

The Winter traveller in Palestine, if he incurs the perils of its storms, escapes the miseries of its intenser heats. And this, in the valley of the Jordan, is a consideration of no little moment. At its mouth, where it empties into the Dead Sea, the river is some 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and in February the heat is fierce enough to make the scantiest shade, after a little, inexpressibly grateful. It was a cloudy morning when we set out from our *khan* for the Dead Sea, and the journey across the desert expanse which stretches from the huts composing modern Jericho to the shores of the sea, was less trying than we expected. But when we reached

its pebbly beach, the blue expanse was too tempting to be resisted, and, disregarding all warnings, we resolved to refresh ourselves with a bath. My companion was in the water before me, and took to it, after a swimmer's fashion, head foremost. As he rose after his dive, he wore a stunned and bewildered expression, and it was only when I was about to follow his example, that he spluttered out, with some difficulty, the warning cry, "Don't put your head under *this* water;" and then, as soon as he could, proceeded to tell me why. The water is extremely grateful, and even exhilarating, to the skin; but when it enters the ears, eyes, and nostrils, it is exquisitely painful, and my fellow-traveller suffered throughout the day for his rashness, besides having his hair converted into a species of salt matting, which it required repeated washings in the Jordan, later on, to restore to its normal condition.

With this exception, bathing in the Dead Sea has singular attractions, and when taken into account in connection with the warm and uniform temperature during the Winter months, it is surprising that it has not become a resort for persons with weak lungs. If the French succeed in building their proposed

railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem (which, however, they are not likely to do, as the question has already become an ecclesiastical one, being made an issue between the Greek and Latin Churches), something of the sort may be attempted.

Undoubtedly the most impressive feature of the Dead Sea is its aspect of desertion. Not only does no fish swim in it, nor (save as a rare exception) does any bird fly above it, no keel cleaves its deep blue waters, nor does any sail traverse its length or breadth. And yet, as we wandered along its shores, and traced its fading outlines by the vanishing ranges of the hills of Moab, its beauties recalled Como and Maggiore, and the soft haze that melted into the distant horizon gave it all the charm of an Italian landscape. How must it have looked, we found ourselves speculating, to that patient and dauntless leader who, gazing down upon it from those summits of Pisgah, which rose just above us as we turned our faces eastward, saw in it one more obstacle between himself and that promised country which he was from thence to see, but which he might not enter! And what must it have been before its waves buried those Cities of the Plain, whose ruins tradition declares may

still be traced, when the surface of the sea is exceptionally calm, showing its salty and sulphurous depths? Such were some of the questions which occupied us as we mounted our horses and rode regretfully away; for I must own that I saw no object of merely natural interest in Palestine that kindled so much unsatisfied curiosity as the Dead Sea. Its mysterious origin, the greater mysteries which, it may be, are hidden in its depths, and then the tragedies whose ruins strew its shores, all these form a combination that challenges inquiry, and kindles the traveller's enthusiasm. Ere we turned our faces toward the Jordan, we strained our glasses in one long look, to catch, if possible, some faint outline of the fortress of Masada, a place not mentioned in the Bible, but tragically associated with the closing days of Jewish national history. It was to this tower, built by Jonathan Maccabeus in the second century, and reënforced and adorned by Herod the Great as a place of final retreat, that a band of Jews retired when Jerusalem was taken by Titus. They were pursued by a Roman commander, Flavius Silva, and the tower was besieged for months without yielding. At length a breach was made, and late one night the Romans prepar-

ed for a final attack. When they made it in the morning, they found no single hand raised to resist them, and entered the walls only to discover Herod's splendid apartments a heap of smoking ruins. As they pushed on, an old woman crept from a hiding-place, and then another, and then a few frightened children. Their story was soon told. They were the sole survivors of 967 persons, who, rather than surrender, had first turned their swords upon their own wives and children, and then drawn lots who should be the executioners of their brethren. When two alone remained, one of these dispatched his fellow, and then, setting fire to the palace, fell upon his own sword. Such a page—blood-stained, but heroic—seems somehow a fitting close to that earlier volume of Hebrew history, to which these days of their smooth, cringing, money-getting, and emasculated descendants, afford no promise of a fitting successor.

I must needs own that it did not greatly comfort us as we turned away in an unsatisfied curiosity from the Dead Sea, to find ourselves standing by the banks of the Jordan. A devout Scotchman, whose volume on the Holy Land is full of most interesting reminiscences, utters something like a lament over

the want of enthusiasm with which other travellers have greeted the waters of the Jordan. We gladly admired his enthusiasm; but we found it quite in vain to attempt to emulate it. Is it a bit of American boastfulness to say that to one accustomed only to English and Scotch rivers, the Jordan may easily seem a very commanding stream? At any rate, it is a meagre and a muddy rivulet compared with what we are wont to know by the name of a river. Undoubtedly it may have been more imposing in other days, and we must also bear in mind its comparative attractions to a people who came to its brink, as did the Hebrews, from what was, relatively, a sterile and unwatered country. But I confess I found myself warming with something of sympathy toward Naaman, especially as I had just been hearing, while in Jerusalem, from a friend fresh from their banks, of the pure, affluent, and sparkling streams of Abana and Pharpar. If the three rivers were then what they are now, the rivers of Damascus must needs have seemed "better than all the waters of Israel."

But we gratefully pitched our tents beside the spreading shade, and recalled the grand and sacred memories which would make the

bank of a far meaner stream than the Jordan consecrated ground. As we did so, we witnessed a scene which taught us how well adapted the Jordan must have been to be a barrier between the Israelites and their heathen neighbors among the hills of Moab. Two men, one of them mounted, came down to the shore, and attempted to swim across. For the first few strokes it appeared easy enough, but presently a fierce current caught them and carried them down toward the Dead Sea as if they had been so many feathers. It seemed they were experts in the art of dealing with the river, for, after a long and hard struggle, in which, again and again, they seemed just upon the point of sinking, they crawled out upon the bank, breathless and exhausted. And so we saw how, save to practised swimmers and exceptionably powerful men, the waters of the Jordan must have offered an impassable barrier.

Our camp was near the spot where the Israelites are supposed to have crossed on their entrance into the Promised Land, and where our Lord is said to have been baptized. So far as I could learn, there is no warrant for either of these traditions; but they are sufficiently credited to bring to the

spot an annually-increasing number of pilgrims of the Greek and Coptic Churches, who wash in the Jordan with exemplary devoutness, but who, it is to be feared, in the case, at any rate, of the members of the Russo-Greek Church, do not easily or often wash again. It seems almost cruel to speak otherwise than tenderly of any, even the most ignorant, devotion to the land of Christ and the scenes of His earthly ministry; but one cannot but regret that there is so little in the vast majority of European pilgrims, whether in conduct or manners, to commend them to the respect or admiration of Arab or Israelite. They are singularly ignorant, repulsively dirty, and pitiably superstitious. But what can be expected of Cossack peasants or Greek palmers, when Monsignor Capel thinks it seemly to celebrate Mass on the banks of the Jordan with two little Arabs to keep the flies away, and a Scotch nobleman, his latest titled pervert, prostrate on a rug before the Host, beneath the rays of a burning sun! Surely, no folly of ignorant homage to supposed sacred places can equal that utter misconception of true reverence which is illustrated in celebrating the most sacred ordinance of the Christian faith before an audience of scoffing Arabs.

For it is to these, to-day, that the banks of the Jordan are given up. They came and performed their hideous sword-dance for our entertainment in the evening, and more repulsive and degraded specimens of their race we had not seen. They are said to perpetuate the worst vices of the Cities of the Plain, and they are thievish and treacherous to a man. And such a people it is who sit down to-day amid the vines and fig-trees of that neglected but still fruitful valley which God once gave to Israel as its exclusive possession! Verily, once Israel "stretched out her branches unto the sea, and her boughs unto the river;" and now "the wild boar out of the wood doth root it up, and the wild beasts of the field," aye, men worse than wild beasts, "devour it."

IX.

Bethlehem.

An Eastern Highway—A Tomb on Exhibition — The First View of Bethlehem — The Manger and its Moslem Guardians.

A visit to Bethlehem has a double charm, which, ordinarily, one does not anticipate. Its associations with the Nativity are apt, until the traveller finds himself upon the ground, to eclipse all others. But in fact the whole neighborhood is perfumed with memories alike sacred and stirring, and there are pages in the elder Testament which get, in a sense quite preëminent and singular, new life and meaning as one reads them surrounded by its clustering hill-sides.

There is something to prepare one for this in the journey from Jerusalem. It is a thronged and animated highway that leads out from the Holy City, and winding down through the

Valley of Hinnom, climbs up again toward the Convent of Mar Elias. On the morning on which we traversed it, the long trains of camels and dromedaries, laden with merchandise from Arabia, met us at every turn. "Have a care of thy camel, O driver!" shouted our dragoman at almost every step; but it seemed to me that the Persian traders whom we met rather resented the arrogance of this Egyptian servant of the despised Franks, and showed no particular eagerness to yield us the road. At such a moment the whole scene on that night at the inn in Bethlehem rose up before the mind with singular vividness, and one could understand how the pushing and prosperous merchantmen of those days could easily have been as indifferent to the comfort of the traveller then as now. Nor only this. Somehow the camels and their turbaned attendants took us back to those still earlier times when certain merchantmen, going down into Egypt, chanced upon Joseph and his brethren, and bought him as a slave for the household of King Pharaoh. But it was not long before we came upon a landmark which recalled the events of patriarchal days with still greater definiteness. This was the tomb of Rachel, which stands close by the road-side,

on the way to Bethlehem, and concerning whose identity there is scarcely any doubt. Like all tombs to be seen in Palestine to-day, it is surmounted by a dome, and the present structure is undoubtedly modern. But there is a remarkably clear chain of evidence connecting the spot with the original event of Rachel's burial, and it is a curious fact that the tomb is a shrine to which Jews, Moslems, and Christians alike resort with equal reverence. When we approached it, however, we found that the door was barred, and on inquiry learned that the property has lately been acquired by a thrifty Israelite, who takes advantage of the universal interest in the spot to exact a fee for admission to this resting-place of one of his ancestors. We would have paid the fee willingly enough, though assured beforehand that there was nothing of interest to be seen within the tomb, but on inquiry we learned that it was not one of the days for its exhibition.

A ride of a few moments more brought us in sight of Bethlehem, and as we saw the sloping hill-sides which surrounded it, already green with the early harvest, the whole story of Ruth who once gleaned among the fields of Boaz rose up before us. A few steps more

and we stood beside the well for whose water David longed when hidden in the cave of Adullam. So, at any rate, tradition has designated a well on the brow of the hill near the village, and whether it may be relied upon or not, we knew that it was to the house of Jesse the Bethlehemite that Samuel came with his horn of oil to anoint the youthful David. Before us, as we looked, were the flocks scattered among the rocks, and a youthful shepherd, calling to a straggler here and there, made the patriarchal employments of those pastoral days to live again.

But everything else is lost sight of in the supreme and absorbing interest of the Event of the Manger. It is true that ecclesiasticism has done wellnigh everything that could be done to destroy, or else to pervert, the surroundings of the original inn and of everything pertaining to it. The "inn" of the Gospels was nothing more than a *khan* or huge enclosure such as we saw a little later in the neighborhood of Solomon's Pools; and the stable, there seems every reason to believe, was no more than a cave in the hill-side, such as I saw repeatedly on the way to the valley of the Jordan, into which animals are driven at nightfall, after which the mouth of the cave

is guarded or else closed with loose stones. Now the whole spot, if indeed it can be identified at all, is built over with monastic buildings, including the Church of the Nativity, which is really two or three churches in one.

To be sure, we were prepared for something of the sort by the ecclesiastical rivalries which gather about the Holy Sepulchre. But there one is at least permitted to go about without perpetual surveillance, while at Bethlehem you are handed over at once to a monk (a very bland and affable gentleman, to be sure), who never leaves you from the moment of your arrival until your departure. As, usually, he is a Latin, you get only the Latin aspect of the situation, and there was a ghastly mockery in the decorous scorn with which this pious personage, while showing us the way amid the subterranean wanderings of the church, pointed out to us a service being said in an adjoining chapel by his Armenian fellow-Christians. This is the spirit which rules in the breasts of men who have chosen it as their "vocation" to lead a "religious" life on the spot where Christ was born, and over which angels hovered, singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth *peace, good-will toward men!*" But a yet more bitter

incongruity was reserved for us. We followed our cowled and shaven leader down a flight of steps, and found ourselves in a cave in the solid rock, a niche in the side of which is marked with a star, round which runs the legend, "*Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christ natus est.*" It is the spot where uncounted pilgrims have knelt as the birthplace and cradle of the Prince of Peace; and yet, so close beside it that his musket grazed you as you stood, with an air of mixed weariness and contempt which no words of mine can paint, stood a Turkish soldier detailed by a Moslem Sultan to prevent Christian devotees from shedding each other's blood on the very stones which, if tradition is to be believed, were once their infant Saviour's resting-place! Amid such surroundings I confess my curiosity was soon satisfied; and I sought the open air and pure sunshine, after the tawdry decorations and stifling odors of oil and incense which marked the subterranean portions of the Church of the Nativity, with unspeakable relief.

On the way, however, we turned aside to see the square vault carved out of the rock, which was once the cell and study of St. Jerome. It is a spot concerning whose identity

there can be scarcely a doubt, and amid its bare and austere surroundings the thoughts which had been choked or dissipated by the scenes and accessories of the chapel of the Nativity reasserted themselves with a strange force. After all, this was Bethlehem, and on the hills and slopes about us the eyes of the Incarnate Son had for the first time opened. With the thought came a new color to the sky and a new sweetness in the air. From the summit of the monastery we could see the road which Joseph, with the Virgin and the Holy Child, must have taken in their flight into Egypt. Far away to the eastward was the silver thread of the Jordan, and beyond, the hills of that Moab from which Ruth had found her way to Bethlehem. As we looked off, the landscape was a very poem of peaceful beauty, and as such we strove to read in it nature's silent prophecy of a peace, one day, though late, to come to sinning and sorrowing humanity, through Him who there entered the world by the gateway of a helpless infancy.

X.

The Jews and their Wailing-Place in Jerusalem.

A Scene near the Walls of the Temple—The Hebrew Lament—The Jews and Jerusalem—Missions in Jerusalem.

On the eve of departure from the Holy Land it is not unnatural that one's thoughts should revert to its ancient people. To-day, of course, they are only one element, and that, in many aspects (despite their numbers), the feeblest and most insignificant element in Jerusalem. But as one meets them in its narrow and dirty streets, as shabby and unclean in aspect as their shabbiest and least cleanly surroundings, he cannot forget that these are the chosen people, and that theirs are promises which many of the devoutest minds in Christendom believe to be still awaiting their grandest fulfilment. And so you find yourself scru-

tinizing them with a peculiar curiosity, which much that you see only helps to stimulate without greatly satisfying.

I mention this because it would seem as if one almost needed some excuse for at least one indulgence of that curiosity which at first seems hardly defensible. We had learned that at a point just outside the enclosure of the Mosque El-Aksa, at a spot which tradition indicates as part of the foundation-walls of the Jewish temple, the Jews were accustomed to assemble on Friday afternoons, and bewail their oppressed condition and the degradation of their holy places. Indeed, some one at our hotel had made an effort to witness the spectacle, and going to the place on a stormy afternoon had found, as he subsequently described the scene, two old women crouched under an umbrella, mumbling certain imprecations from the Psalms of David. The scene as thus depicted seemed only too much in accordance with what we had already seen among the Jews, whose indolence and reluctance to encounter any discomfort is greatly encouraged by the condition of idleness in which the mistaken charity of wealthy Israelites in London and elsewhere too largely maintains them.

On the day of our visit to the "Jew's wailing-place," as it has come to be called, the scene was, however, a very different one. The sky was cloudless, and the air as soft as Summer. Winding down a narrow and dirty lane, we came suddenly, on turning a corner, upon an assemblage numbering perhaps two hundred persons, of both sexes, and apparently of every rank in society, the most of whom were ranged along the wall of large stones which the famous painting of Gerome has made familiar, and which, whether it be a part of the foundation of Solomon's Temple or not, is undoubtedly the remnant of a very ancient structure. Standing with their faces, in some instances, pressed closely against the rugged stone wall, was a row of men and women, the men standing by themselves and the women by themselves, engaged in repeating passages from the seventy-fourth and seventy-ninth Psalms.*

I had heard of this observance from others, and expected to find it a formal and mechanical performance, much like the recitation of the Psalter as one hears it in Jewish synagogues at home. But in truth nothing could

* In the Appendix will be found a vivid and literal translation of the passages used on these occasions, which has been made by the Rev. L. C. Newman.

be more different or less mechanical. There were exhibitions of feeling so intense and so uncontrolled that it became, in some instances, most painful to witness them, and I confess that, sitting calmly on my horse, a mere spectator of such passionate outbursts of emotion, I felt as if I were almost guilty of an indecorum. There were aged women, with their heads bowed against the chill stone, sobbing out, in their ancient Hebrew tongue, such words as "Lord, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled," amid floods of tears, and with paroxysms of grief which shook the whole frame; and near them stood strong men, to whose tones it was impossible to listen for even a few moments without being affected by them. One of these was a man a little past middle life, whose dress indicated him to be a Polish Jew, and whose rapid and impassioned recitation of the particular Psalms I have referred to had in it something of that magnetic quality which is invariably found in those who are the leaders in "revivals," and other popular religious movements. In his hands he held an open copy of the Hebrew Psalter, over which his face was bent, and whose pages were literally blurred with his tears. Around

him stood a group, some of them his own country-people, but others of various nationalities, who, from time to time, joined in the verses which he was reading. One of these was a Portuguese Jew (as I learned afterward), of singularly dignified and stately presence—a person whose dress and bearing evidently indicated him to be some one of consequence. He succeeded better than those about him in controlling his feelings, but, while there was no vehement outburst, there was something in the profound grief of his face, with its air of settled melancholy, and the eyes red with weeping, which was even more affecting. After a little I dismounted from my horse, and walked slowly along the line, only to find at every point in it the same evidences of strong and intense emotion. It was not until I turned to ride away that I encountered anything incongruous with the sombre sadness of the whole spectacle, and that was from the lips of a richly-dressed Arab, who said, with a sneer, "They may weep as much as they choose, but Jerusalem will never be theirs again."

Certainly not by such means, which are pitiful enough, after all. For, though the Arab believes the Sultan to be the king of kings, and the crowner of the crowned, Chris-

tendom knows very well that there is no feebler potentate upon a throne. And, weak as are the Jews in Jerusalem, they are strong enough upon 'Change, whether in London, Paris, Frankfort, or New York. If a few great Hebrew capitalists cared enough for their Holy City to risk a loan to the Sublime Porte, they could make such terms with the Sultan as would secure to them Jerusalem, and half of Syria besides. But as it is, the religious enthusiasm of the modern Hebrew finds its chief exhibition in the well-meant, but most unwise, benefactions of Sir Moses Montefiore, who maintains large numbers of Israelites in idleness, and has built alms-houses, etc., which are filled thus far, if common report is to be believed, with those who least deserve such shelter.

In truth, the Jews in Jerusalem present a problem no less perplexing than that which they offer for the solution of Christian people anywhere else. The Church of England is doing a good if not extensive work among them, under the oversight of Bishop Gobat; but the discouragements and difficulties of that work, it is hardly possible, save on the ground, to appreciate. Nevertheless, as I learned from the Rev. Mr. Walton, at present

at the head of the mission work there, there is, beside the work in the schools, a work of equal interest among adults who voluntarily seek the missionaries and take up their residence in the Inquirers' Home, and who from thence pass by baptism into the fellowship of the Church. Some of these converts are among the most respected citizens of Jerusalem, and by their daily walk and conversation adorn the doctrine of their Master. But they are not many in number, and any one who exhibits the least disposition to look into the matter of Christianity must do it, as in primitive days, almost at the risk of his life. More than once when a young man has sought the Inquirers' Home by night and by stealth, he has been pursued thither by his relatives and acquaintances, who have stormed the house and taken him away by force. And what complicates the work is the hostility to the missionaries, not only on the part of the Jews, but also of the Mohammedans. The Moslem at once hates and despises the Christian, and this feeling, which is more or less intense elsewhere, seems, for some reason or other, to culminate in Jerusalem. It is only a few months since the missionary, Mr. Walton, was attacked at night by some Arabs, who had so

far the sympathy of the police that one of them stood within a few feet during the whole progress of the outrage without the slightest sign of interference. Under these circumstances, one cannot but honor the courage and devotion of those who persevere in labors thus hedged about by dangers and discouragements.

XI.

Is it worth while to Visit the Holy Land?

The Palestine of the Imagination and the Palestine of Fact—The Rewards of Travel in the Holy Land—Its Comparative Facility.

In concluding these reminiscences, there are one or two things which should, perhaps, be said, if only to prevent misapprehension. One's first impressions of the Holy Land will be apt to include a considerable element of disap-

pointment, and, as has already been indicated, something of the shock with which one discovers the most sacred localities profaned by the incongruous character of their surroundings, will be apt to transfer itself to the descriptions which he may give of them. And, as a consequence of this, the question may very naturally be asked, "Is it, after all, worth while to visit the Holy Land?" In other words, is not very much of what one sees in Palestine so painful and disillusionizing (if I may coin such a word) as to make it at least doubtful whether it is not wiser to stay away? It is something undoubtedly to have a more exact and minute knowledge of the land hallowed by the footsteps of patriarchs and prophets, and most of all, by those of the Master and His Apostles; but is it not something more to be able to preserve our ideal Holy Land unspoiled by any rude disclosures of a degenerate age and people?

Of course, the answer to this question will depend somewhat upon the mental constitution of those who ask it. There are some natures to whom the creations of the imagination are more precious and more helpful than the ruder contact with actual fact. But most persons, it may safely be presumed, will prize

most the attainment of definite information, and will find in it, despite the presence of any element that may shatter cherished illusions, the most substantial help to a reverent and intelligent reading of the two Testaments.

Certainly, this was my own experience. When in the Holy Land, I was pained, as many others have been, with the often dismal incongruity between its traditions and its people, and still more between its most holy places and the moral and religious atmosphere that surrounds them. It is impossible that this should be otherwise, unless one has ceased to feel at all. No amount of familiarity with, for instance, the ecclesiastical quarrels which annually take place around the Holy Sepulchre, if that familiarity has been derived merely from books, can make one insensible to the shock which he must needs receive when he actually witnesses such quarrels, or the consequences of them, with his own eyes. And nothing, I think, is more natural than that such a feeling should find somewhat strong expression.

But, on the other hand, there are other impressions far more vivid and more enduring, of which, for a very different reason, a traveller is apt to say far less. If, to such a one,

the sight of Jerusalem itself, of the Mount of Olives, of the Garden of Gethsemane, is a vision of which he has been dreaming all his life —if that vision shows to him scenes which are associated with all that is to him most precious and most hallowed, he will, unless his enthusiasm is of a very superficial nature, be very guarded in its expression. Effusive utterance is not, I venture to submit, either natural or easy, where one feels most deeply. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth does, doubtless, speak, but not always, nor when the heart is most full, with many words nor with "gushing" volubility. I remember hearing, some years ago, a young girl, while watching a sunrise over Mont Blanc from the terrace at Chamounix, exclaim, while her features were for the moment transfigured by the double light of her own emotions and of the splendors which they reflected, "How *wonderful!*" and though there was much eloquence on the occasion, from artistic, and poetic, and even theological lips, that one word, vibrating as it was with the intense feeling which throbbed behind it, seemed to me to be far more expressive than all the rest.

Even so, nay, rather far more, is this true of what one sees in Syria. I think it is quite

impossible to see it without the stirring of deeper feelings, beside which any emotion of disappointment or pain fades into comparative nothingness. If I may venture to refer to my own experience, I find that everything in Palestine that at all shocked me, or jarred upon my sense of reverence, has, somehow, faded out of my memory, while Olivet, and Bethany, and the hill-sides of Bethlehem are to-day a living vision of luminous and beautiful reality. A few Sundays ago it was my lot in the order of morning service to read the Second Lesson for the day, with its history of St. Peter's vision at Joppa, and of his visit to Cornelius the centurion at Cæsarea, and, as I did so, the whole coast of the Mediterranean, with, I had almost said, every step of the way between the modern Jaffa and the still visible ruins of Cæsarea, lived in my mind's eye, with all its surrounding scenery, precisely as it must needs, in that unchanging land, have been present to the eye of the Apostle himself; and I found myself almost wishing for a moment that I might pause and make it live, if only in some imperfect measure, before the eyes of the listening congregation.

And this, in one word, is the supreme ad-

vantage of travel in the Holy Land. It makes the Bible another book. Its geography becomes, so to speak, disentangled and distinct. Its scenery is an enduring memory, and a perpetual and most helpful commentary. One reads, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help," and at once there rise before his sight those mountain fastnesses whose winding pathways the traveller of to-day so often threads, and safe amid which God so often hid the fugitive David. To say that such impressions can be derived from books, from the descriptions of others, or from pictures of whatsoever sort, is to say what all our experience is perpetually disproving.

And this, as it seems to me, is the answer to the question with which I began. It *is* worth while to visit the Holy Land, simply because in no other way can one derive impressions so vivid, so enduring, and so enduringly helpful. It is worth, to any clergyman, all it costs him, and far more, to see Palestine, even in the most hurried and imperfect way. And it need not cost him so very much, either in time or money. Three months and $500 are enough to cover one's outlay of both kinds from the time he leaves his door in our own

land until he returns to it. And by making those months September, October, and November, one could be at his post before Christmas, and have six weeks of the very best weather, viz., one in September for northern Syria, all of October, and one week in November, for the country further south. This would allow three weeks for the journey from New York to Beyrout (it can be done in eighteeen days), and three weeks to return *via* Alexandria in Egypt. I mention these details because they answer questions which are so often asked of those who have visited the East, and because they may help others to accomplish a journey which can never cease to have supreme attractions to every student of the Bible, as, indeed, to Christians of every name and land. The Holy Land is the enduring interpreter of the Word of God, and of the dealings of His Providence with a people whose changing and eventful fortunes have had an almost incalculable influence upon human history. As such, it will abundantly reward every endeavor to traverse its varied area, and to become familiar with its most suggestive characteristics.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

Literal translation of the Jewish lamentations at the place of wailing at Jerusalem.

1.

On account of these things, and on account of those, do I constantly weep.

My eyes, my eyes do flow with water.

Even for the destruction of our holy house, which was trampled upon and trodden down.

I will ever mourn year by year.

A holy lamentation on account of the holy things, and on account of the sanctuary.

A voice of woe is heard at hoary Ramah.
A voice of wail from sainted Zion's hill.
A midnight's voice of woe is heard at hoary Ramah.

2.

I think of the days when I was a Princess.

In the hand of Jehovah a diadem of glory.

And now I am black.

I am sunk in the pit of the deepest clay.

On account of this

A voice of woe is heard, etc.

3.

The only beloved spouse have I then been.
And the glory of the Highest was I named.
And now I am descended to the lowest degradation.
And my beloved and my friend went up on high.

A voice of woe, etc.

4.

Together my beloved virgins and friends
Weep with me for my many woes.
No one enlarges my tent and strengthens my stakes.
For my Beloved departed from me, and I went into captivity.

A voice of woe, etc.

5.

From my high place have I been cast down as an old hag.
He sent fire in my bones ; oh, it prevailed,
And I went into captivity a lone widow.
Judah was driven into captivity in perfect misery.

A voice of woe, etc.

6.

The bride of the Lord was I in the midst of the temple.
His cloud was daily seen upon His dwelling on Mount Zion.

And now I am cast away like a poor intruder.
My enemy took my ornaments, and I am in miserable poverty.

A voice of woe, etc.

7.

My priests and my elders my enemies slaughtered.
Oh, they are the seed of the friend of God, holding fast His covenant.
My precious children and my virgins.
They were driven in captivity.

A voice of woe, etc.

8.

Behold in all these *misfortunes* none seeks my peace.
The desolation is complete, and to the nations I lift up my head for sympathy.
But my enemies mock me, dare not call Him my husband.
Woe is me, for I fell before merciless children.

A voice of woe, etc.

9.

Father of mercies, we pray Thee, return to Zion.
May we see with our eyes the rebuilding of the Temple.
And may this house be exalted.
And then may Thy redeemed ones list their joyful praises,
And the voice of thanksgiving.

Literal translation of another elegy. Each distich begins with a Hebrew letter in alphabetical order. It consists of twelve verses. The first verse is repeated after each verse:

1.

Wail, O Zion, with thy cities,
Like as a woman in great anguish,
And like a virgin girded with sackcloth
For the husband of her youth.

2.

On account of the city which is forsaken,
By reason of the transgression of thy people,
And on account of the blasphemer's intrusion
Within thy beauteous sanctuary.

3.

On account of the exile of God's ministers,
Who melodiously chanted the songs of thy praise;
And on account of their blood which was spilt,
Like the water of thy rivers.

4.

On account of the joyous dances
Which are now silent in thy cities,
And on account of the Assembly Palace which has
been destroyed,
And the abolition of thy Sanhedrim.

5.

On account of thy continual sacrifices
And the redemption of the first-born,
And on account of the profanation of the vessels of
the temple
And the altar of incense.

6.

On account of the royal scions,
The sons of David, thy nobles,
And on account of their beauty, which became dark
Since the removal of thy diadem.

7.

On account of the,glory which has departed
At the time of the destruction of thy palaces,
And on account of the oppression of the oppressor,
Who made thy girdles sackcloth.

8.

On account of the wounds and multitude of bruises
With which her Nazarites were smitten,
And on account of the dashing against the stones
Of thy infants and thy young men.

9.

On account of the joy amongst thy enemies
Who mock at thy calamity,
And on account of the affliction of the noble sons,
Thy princes, thy chaste ones.

10.

On account of the transgression which perverted
The appointed pathway of thy footsteps,
And on account of the hosts of thy congregations,
The sunburnt ones, and dark ones.

11.

On account of the voices of thy abusers
At the time when thy carcasses were multiplied,
And on account of thy raging cursers,
Within the tabernacle of thy court.

12.

On account of thy name, which has been profaned,
In the mouth of thy upstart oppressors,
And on account of their loud solicitude,
Hearken and listen to her words,
Wail, O Zion.

These lamentations are finished by several prayers for the speedy coming of the Messiah. The following is the concluding verse:

In mercy, Lord, Thy people's prayer attend;
Grant the desire of mourning Israel.
O shield of Abraham, our Redeemer send,
And call His glorious name Emmanuel.

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